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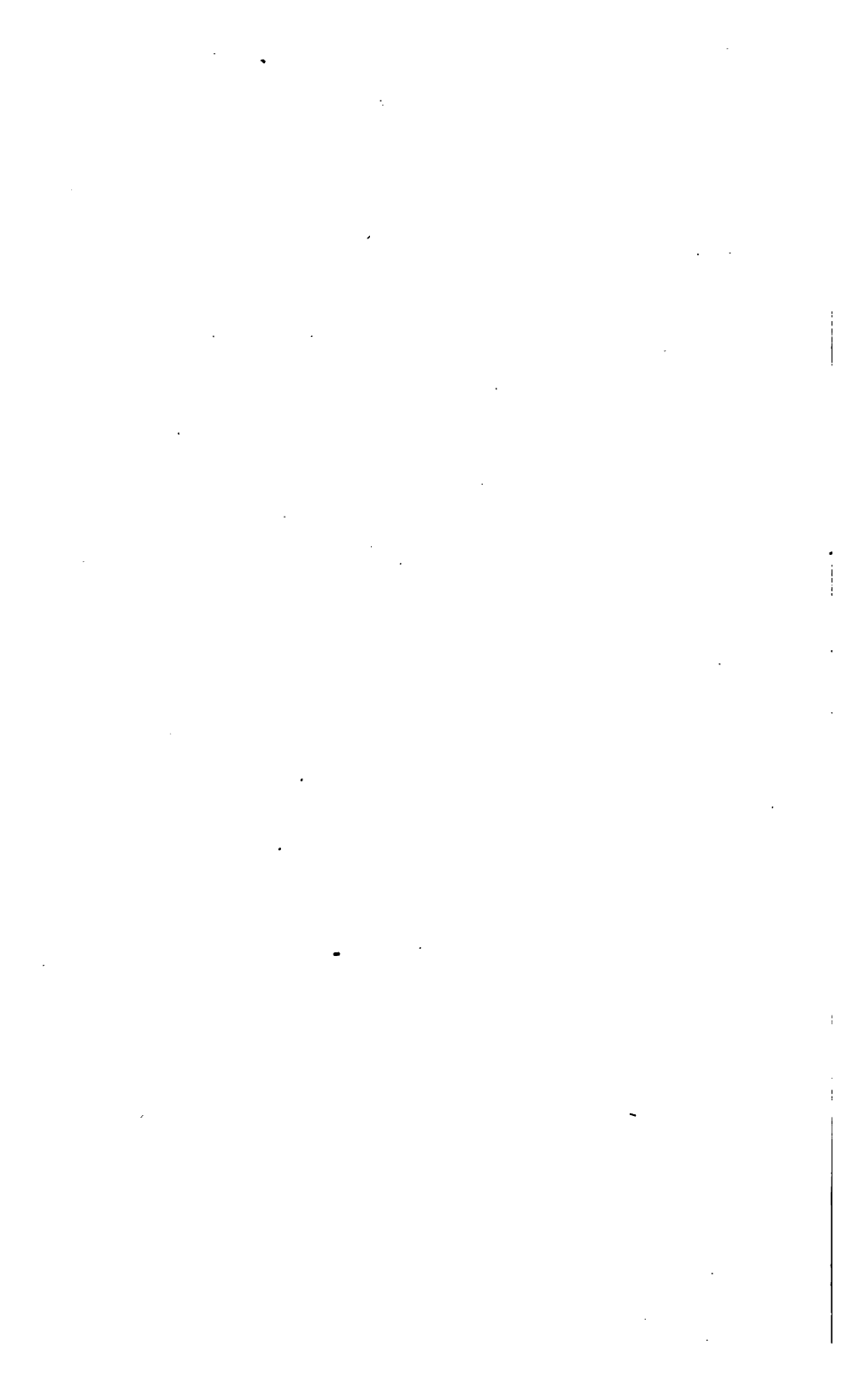
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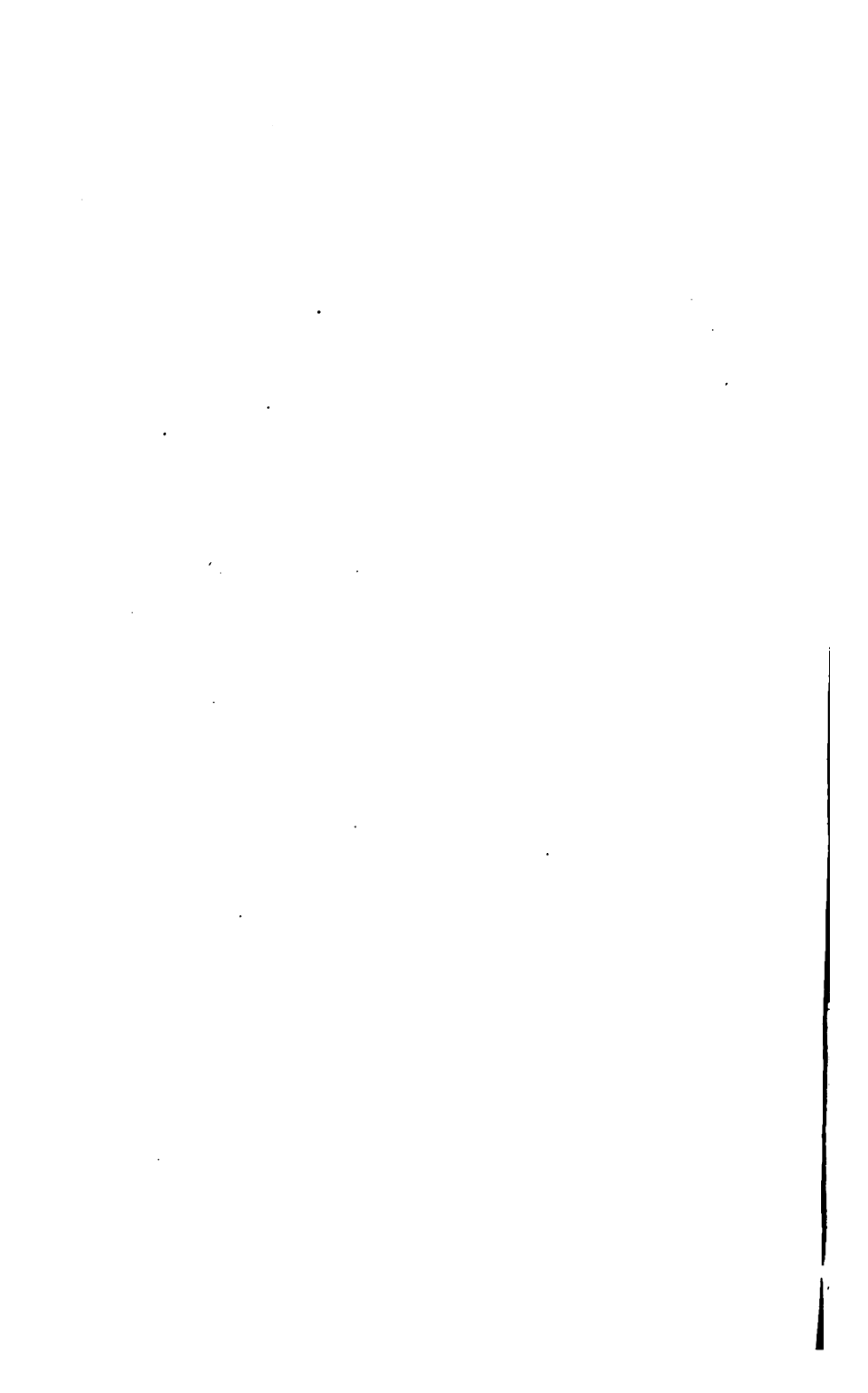
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HANDEL'S VISIT TO DUBLIN.



AN ACCOUNT
OF THE
VISIT OF HANDEL TO DUBLIN:

WITH
INCIDENTAL NOTICES OF HIS LIFE AND CHARACTER.

BY
HORATIO TOWNSEND, ESQ.,
BARRISTER-AT-LAW,

AUTHOR OF "A PRELIMINARY DISCOURSE ON THE PRINCIPLES OF THE MORAL LAW."



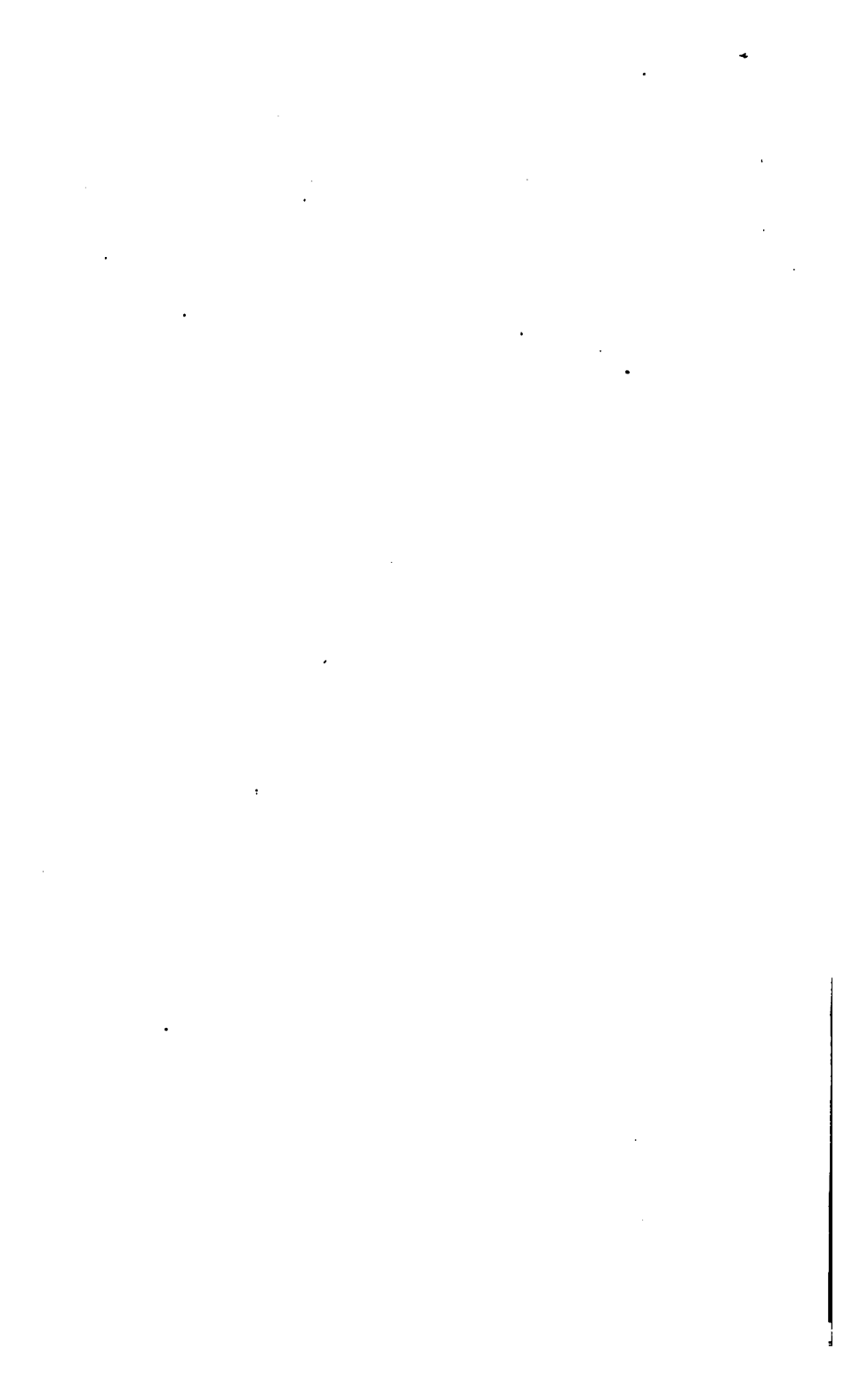
"Arrest him, Empress, or you sleep no more!
She heard, and drove him to th' Hibernian shore."—POPE.

DUBLIN
JAMES M^cGLASHAN, 50, UPPER SACKVILLE-STREET.
WILLIAM S. ORR AND CO., AND J. A. NOVELLO, LONDON.

MDCCLII.

Dublin : Printed by GEORGE DROUGHT, 6, Bachelor's-walk.

TO
THE MEMBERS
OF
The University of Dublin Choral Society,
INSTITUTED IN
TRINITY COLLEGE,
A.D. 1837,
THESE PAGES ARE INSCRIBED.



PREFACE.

THE following pages contain the results of an attempt to collect and arrange the materials for an account of Handel's visit to Ireland. Excepting the researches of Dr. Burney, the results of which are given in the fourth volume of his History of Music, I am not aware that any other inquiry into evidence existing in Ireland on the subject, was ever instituted. Dr. Burney never could have seen the pages of *Faulkner's Journal*, which he cites as authority for his inaccurate account of the musical transactions of Handel in Dublin. His expression is, not that he had consulted them himself, but "*Faulkner's Journal* for 1741 and 1742 have been consulted," &c. So industrious and faithful a chronicler, had he consulted these records himself, would have avoided the errors into which he was led, on the information of some other person. It will be seen, however, that on one important point, namely, the first performance of the

Messiah, the additional evidence here adduced, confirms the conclusion at which Dr. Burney arrived.

I was first led into these inquiries, by the circumstance of my friend, George Finlayson, Esq., Barrister-at-law, having (in the year 1849) invited my attention to the advertisements of Handel's performances in *Faulkner's Journal*, which I had never seen before, and which he had examined already, in order to obtain evidence on the long-debated question of where the *Messiah* was first performed. Mr. Finlayson's previous investigations had detected, in the columns of *Faulkner*, the statement, that Handel had composed the oratorio of the *Messiah* for a charity in Dublin. On Mr. Finlayson pointing out to me, at Marsh's library, the paragraph containing this statement, I was surprised that so interesting a fact should have lain concealed in the pages of *Faulkner*, for more than a century, unknown to the biographers of Handel, and not elicited even by the inquiries of Dr. Burney. The interest I felt in anything relating to Handel, induced me to prosecute the train of inquiry suggested by Mr. Finlayson's discovery; and the result of my labours is here offered to the public.

The Dublin newspapers of the last century, from which I have derived material information, are be-

come very scarce. The only copy which I have seen, of the volume of *Faulkner's Journal* for the years 1741 and 1742, is the one already alluded to, preserved, with other volumes of *Faulkner*, in Archbishop Marsh's library, adjoining St. Patrick's Cathedral. The set of *Faulkner*, in the library of Trinity College, wants this volume. For an opportunity of consulting an imperfect volume of the *Dublin News-Letter* of that date, I am indebted to the kindness of Mr. Bussell, of Westmorland-street. The other old Dublin journals from which I have quoted, are in the library of Trinity College.

The extracts from the books of Mercer's Hospital appear for the first time in print, drawn from the seclusion in which they had lain for upwards of a century.

The notices, compiled from the pages of Sir John Hawkins, Dr. Burney, Dr. Busby, Mr. Hogarth, and other eminent writers, concerning the life of Handel before and after his residence in Ireland, could not be omitted in a work which professes to give an account, not merely of the transactions of Handel during his visit to Ireland, but of the circumstances which led to that event, and of its consequences. They were necessary also, in order to give some idea of the character of Handel,

without which, to some minds, the mere narrative would be comparatively uninteresting.

It is my pleasing task to acknowledge the valuable assistance with which I have been favoured. I am indebted to the Right Hon. the Earl Howe, for his lordship's very obliging response to my request, that he would favour me with copies of Handel's letters to his lordship's ancestor, Mr. Jennens, relating to his visit to Ireland, from the originals in his lordship's possession—for his permission to insert them in this work, and for his kind and unsolicited communication of the remarkable extract from a letter of Mr. Jennens, which appears in these pages; to the Hon. and Very Rev. the Dean of St. Patrick's and of Christ Church, for his permission to search the books of both cathedrals; to the Rev. Richard Barton, Precentor of Christ Church, and to S. P. Lea, Esq., Registrar to the Dean and Chapter of St. Patrick's, for their attention to my inquiries; to Dr. Osborne, for his permission to consult the records of Mercer's Hospital; to Dr. Corrigan, for allowing me to search the books of the Infirmary in Jervis-street; to Edward F. Rimbault, Esq., L.L.D., for valuable assistance, and for his attention to my inquiries; to W. C. Quin, Esq., for allowing me to insert in this publication, from the

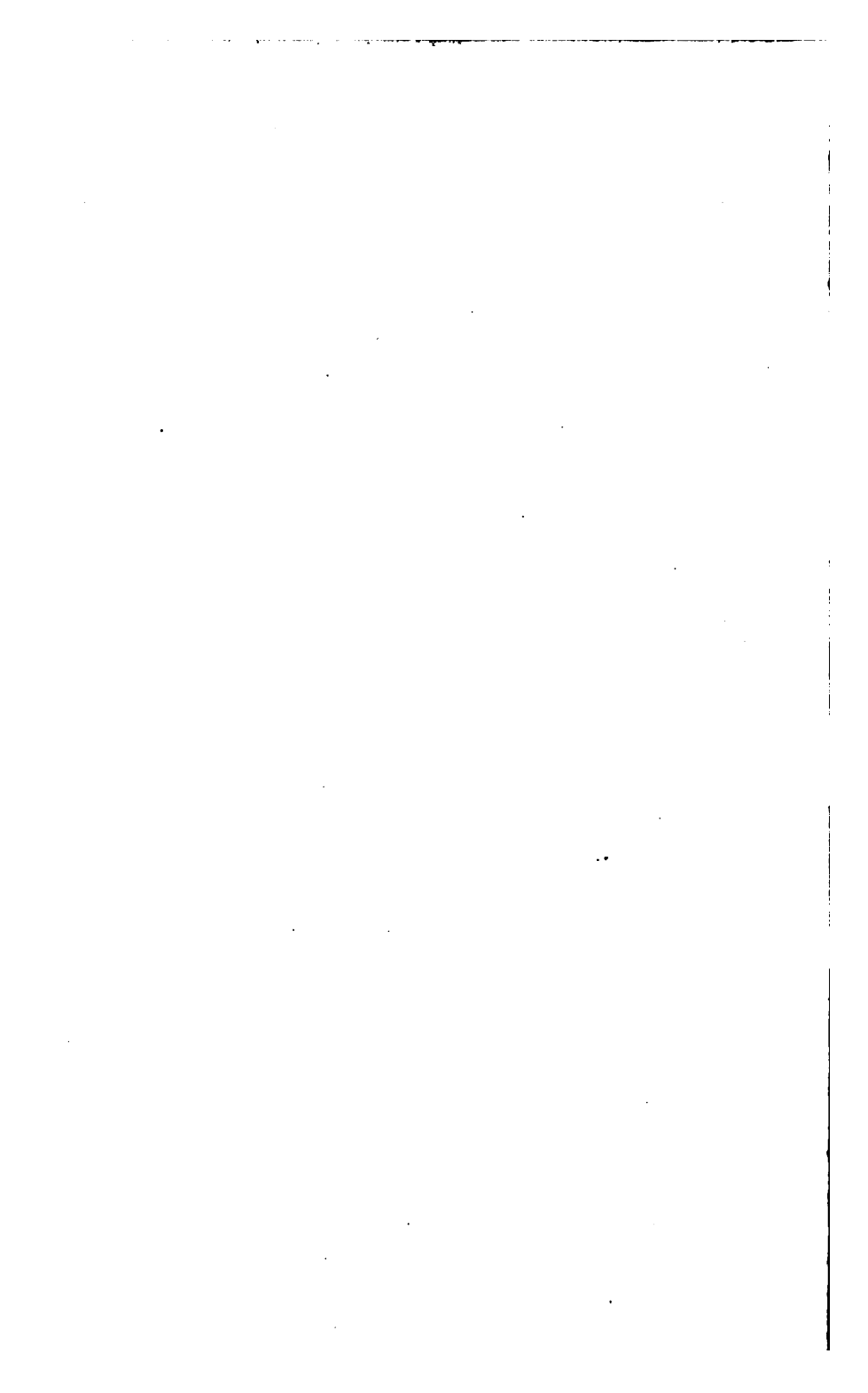
original in his possession, a letter of Dr. Burney to Mr. Quin's grandfather, Dr. Quin ; and to George Finlayson, Esq., for several useful suggestions, besides what has been already stated.

All other persons from whom I have asked or received assistance, are requested to accept my thanks.

It is right also that I should acknowledge having derived valuable information on the subject of the oratorio of the *Messiah*, from the preface by Dr. Rimbault, to his edition of the *Messiah*, published by the Handel Society : and from a preface, signed "T. B.," and dated "Exeter-Hall, August, 1844," to a book of the words of the *Messiah*, issued by the "Sacred Harmonic Society" of London.

Not having had an opportunity of consulting the London newspapers of the last century, or the manuscripts of Handel's music, I rely, for the accuracy of any statement respecting them, on the concurrent testimony of Dr. Burney and other writers.

27, MOLESWORTH-STREET,
March 17, 1852.



AN ACCOUNT

OF THE

VISIT OF HANDEL TO DUBLIN.

IN the days when Handel visited Ireland, the district of Dublin adjacent to the Castle, and comprising Chancery-lane, Hoey's-court, and other old localities, was inhabited by many of the wealthier and higher classes. Still are to be found here the remains of what were then considered to be fine houses, the residences at that time of several eminent persons ; but the descendants of those who built them, and took pride in them, now occupy handsome squares and streets which had no existence then ; and the haunts of their ancestors, abandoned to poverty and neglect, offer no attraction, save to those who love to trace the history of former days in their relics. Fishamble-street, in this quarter of the town, is one of the oldest streets in Dublin. In a record of the 19th year of Richard II., it is called "*Vicus Piscatorius, in parochia Sancti Johannis*" (Fish-street, in the parish of St. John) ; and its date may be traced to a much remoter antiquity.* Under the eastern gable of

* Harris's History of Dublin, p. 87.

the ancient Cathedral of Christ Church, separated and hidden from it by a row of houses, it winds its crooked course down the hill from Castle-street to the Liffey, as forlorn and neglected as other old streets in its vicinity. A number of trunkmakers' shops give it an aspect somewhat peculiar ; miserable alleys open from it on the right and left ; a barber's pole or two overhang the footway ; and huxters' shops are frequent, with their wonted array of articles more useful than ornamental.

One would never guess, looking at this old street, that it was once the festive resort of the wealthy and refined. It needs an effort of imagination to conceive of it as having ever witnessed the gay throng of fashion and aristocracy—the Viceregal cortege—ladies, in hoops and feathers ; and “white-gloved beaux,” in bag, and sword, and chapeau ; with scores of liveried footmen and pages ; and the press of coaches, and chariots, and sedan-chairs. Yet such was the scene often presented here in the eighteenth century.

The street is not without a few features still existing to testify to the better condition of things in former days. Within a court-yard, on the left as you descend from Castle-street, you have a glimpse of a stately mansion, of red brick, with stone architraves to the door and windows, which was once the Deanery-house of Christ Church, but has for many years ceased to be so occupied, and is now used as a parish school and almshouse.

Passing the old Deanery, you come to where the street expands on the right into an oblique angle, in the far corner of which, rather retired from the houses, appears a mean, neglected old building, with a wooden

porch. It is known to few of the inhabitants of Dublin by sight, but to many by name, as the Fishamble-street Theatre.

It was originally a music-hall, built more than a century ago, by the subscriptions of a charitable musical society; in whose advertisements, in *Faulkner's Journal*, it is described as "their New Room, which is finished in the most elegant manner, under the direction of Captain Castle."* It was first opened to the public on the 2nd of October, in the year 1741,† and was subsequently the resort of various brilliant assemblies. A Musical Academy used to hold its meetings here, under the presidency of the Earl of Mornington, father of the Duke of Wellington. The members of this institution were exclusively persons moving in the first circles of society—ladies, noblemen, statesmen, lawyers, and divines. Accordingly, in the list of members we find Lord Mornington, leader of the band; among the violoncellos, Lord Bellamont, and Dean Burke, afterwards Archbishop of Tuam, and Sir John Dillon; among the flutes, Lord Lucan; at the harpsichord, Lady Freke, Dr. Quin, and the Right Hon. W. Brownlow; and other eminent names of ladies and of gentlemen allotted to the different departments of the orchestra. The meetings of this Academy were private and select, excepting once a-year, when, for the benefit of some charity, the members performed at a public

* Quere—Castell, or Cassell?

† *Faulkner's Journal*. The title of this newspaper is "THE DUBLIN JOURNAL," but it is commonly mentioned or quoted as "*Faulkner's Journal*." It was published in Dublin, on Tuesdays and Saturdays; "Printed by GEORGE FAULKNER, in *Essex-street*, opposite to the Bridge."

concert, to which all persons who paid for their tickets were admitted.*

After the lapse of years, part of the Music-hall fell down, and the remainder was converted into a theatre. A volume might be written, curious and amusing, of the history of the old Music-hall in Fishamble-street. But its most interesting associations are those of its earliest days.

In that old building Handel held his concerts. Within those walls the first performance of the oratorio of the *Messiah* took place, under the superintendence of the great composer. It was there that those immortal notes were heard for the first time publicly; then, and ever after, to astonish and delight the world.

On the 18th of November, in the year 1741, about six weeks after the opening of the Music-hall, Handel arrived in Dublin. His peculiar position at that period, the circumstances which induced him to make Ireland for a while his place of residence, and the influence which that memorable visit had on his future fortunes, will not be understood without a short narrative of some passages of his previous life.

In the year 1710, Handel, then in the twenty-sixth year of his age, after making the tour of Italy, and having acquired a distinguished reputation, had visited England, towards the end of the reign of Queen Anne. He had taken this step, partly from curiosity and partly on invitation from several English noblemen, with whom he had been acquainted in Italy, and at the court of the Elector of Hanover, afterwards George I. At that

* Whitelaw's History of Dublin; where see the Statutes of the Musical Academy, 1758.

period he was retained in the service of the Elector, as *maestro di capella*, and had no intention of making a permanent stay in England. But the public applause with which he was met, the friendship and regard with which he was received by several eminent persons, and the munificent patronage of the Queen, and subsequently of her successor, George I., induced him to fix his abode in England; where, for many years, he enjoyed a high degree of popular favour, composed several operas and other celebrated works, and exercised a powerful influence in the musical world.

In process of time, however, a change came over his fortunes. A Royal Academy of Music was founded in London, in 1720, under the auspices of the King, by certain of the nobility and gentry, for the support of Italian operas; and, after some disputes among the directors, Handel, Giovanni Bononcini, and Attilio Areosti (a Romish ecclesiastic), were engaged as a triumvirate of composers. Handel was also commissioned to engage the singers; for which purpose he went to Dresden, and engaged Senesino, and other eminent vocalists. It seems not to have been the design of the directors of the Academy, in appointing this triumvirate, to set them in rivalry against each other, but merely to secure the three most eminent composers of the day for their Academy. Rivals, however, they of necessity became. During the first year of the Academy, Handel and Bononcini furnished each an opera; but at the beginning of the second year, it happened that the task of setting to music the opera of *Muzio Scevola* was, by some accident or other, divided between the three composers; of whom, Attilio set the first act, Bononcini the second, and Handel the

third.* Each man also wrote an overture for his own separate portion of this Cerberian production, and endeavoured to endow his act with the properties of a distinct drama—a beginning, a middle, and an end.

Previously to this curious division of labour, public opinion, as well as that of the directors, had been divided on the relative merits of two, at least, of the triumvirate, Handel and Bononcini; for neither the fame nor the talents of Attilio were equal to those of the other two. This difference of sentiment led to a contest between the supporters of these musicians, which was carried on for several years, with exceeding vehemence and fury, in the genuine spirit of all party warfare; and the excitement of the strife was only further exasperated by what the public supposed to be intended as a formal trial of skill.

Dr. Burney pronounces a high critical eulogy on Handel's execution of his part of the work, and adjudges to him a palm of immense superiority over his competitors. Public opinion or fashion, however, continued divided. Handel and Bononcini, and the admirers or partisans of either, maintained still the rivalry and the conflict. For several years the three members of the triumvirate continued to compose operas alternately; and the preponderance of public approval was generally in favour of Handel. In 1772, Bononcini ceased from the contest, and retired from the Academy. He was haughty and capricious in his temper; fond of telling incredible stories of himself; and before he quitted England, was convicted of the paltry dishonesty of pretending to be

* The authorities differ as to the parts allotted to Attilio and Bononcini.

the composer of an Italian madrigal, which had been written many years before by Lotti, organist of St. Mark's, at Venice, who proved his claim. The surges of party feeling, which had been powerfully excited, continued to heave and murmur as long as Bononcini remained in the kingdom.*

Attilio (Padre Attilio, as he was called), a modest and ingenious man, also retired, and left England.

It was in reference to these celebrated feuds that Dean Swift, who was by nature incapable of entering into the merits of the controversy, wrote the well-known epigram :—

“Some say that Signor Bononcini,
Compared to Handel, is a mere ninny;
Others aver that to him, Handel
Is scarcely fit to hold the candle.
Strange that such difference should be
“Twixt tweedledum and tweedledee!”

In the year 1726, previously to the retirement of Bononcini, circumstances occurred which involved Handel in a series of painful and ruinous disputes; induced new matter of violent dissension among the musical world, and among many who were not musical, but who sided in the controversy from mere fashion, or from meaner motives; and eventually brought about the dissolution of the Academy. Almost from its first institu-

* Sir John Hawkins remarks that the cause of Handel was espoused by the Tories, and that of Bononcini by the Whigs.—*Hist. of Music*, vol. v. p. 276. Fifty years afterwards, a similar musical warfare raged at Paris, between the *Gluckists* and the *Piccinists*, as the partisans of Gluck and Piccini were called. It terminated in the Parisians getting tired of the controversy, and agreeing to appreciate the merits of both composers.

tion Handel had been on ill terms with Senesino, the singer. Handel was, perhaps, too imperious; and Senesino was capricious, spoilt, and refractory. Handel had a lofty idea of the office and dignity of a composer, and a very low estimate of the office and dignity of a singer. Senesino ill brooked the indifference with which he was treated by "Giant Handel." He was accustomed to the extravagant applause which an opera audience are wont to bestow on a favourite singer. He knew himself to be a prime favourite with the English nobility, and could not but feel that their raptures were conferred less on the beauty or grandeur of the composition than on the execution, and flights, and fopperies of the vocalist. He felt his importance, and took his measures accordingly. Handel, who always evinced consummate judgment in suiting his composition to the peculiar powers and idiosyncrasy of a performer, was made very indignant by Senesino refusing to sing what he composed for him. The composer could not act the part of a subordinate; and on the refusal of the directors to discard Senesino, Handel refused to compose further for him. Senesino left England in 1726, and went to Italy, in consequence of the state of his health, and did not return till 1730.

Signora Cuzzoni, one of the best singers of the time, was also capricious and refractory, and, prompted by Senesino's example, refused to sing what Handel wrote for her. She stood very high in public favour; and Handel, in order to subdue her rebellious spirit, engaged for the Academy, in 1726, Faustina, a very celebrated singer, and, with a view to having Cuzzoni dismissed, composed his songs to suit the peculiar powers of her rival; and thereupon ensued new scenes of absurd ani-

mosities, and party violence and cabals. "*The town*" (to use a phrase common with the writers of that day) became engaged in a furious controversy about the respective merits of these pretty nightingales. Ladies of the highest rank entered with enthusiasm into the strife. One formidable and numerous party were ranged on the side of Cuzzoni; another, equally numerous and formidable, flourished their fans on the side of Faustina. The men, in general, as Hawkins tells us, "were on the side of Faustina, as being by far a more agreeable woman than Cuzzoni:" a strange principle of musical criticism, but excellently suited to the capacities of the idle opera-loungers, who thronged the theatre, and turned it into a bear-garden. When the partisans of either singer began to applaud, the others began to hiss; and catcalls and other accompaniments expressed the criticisms of the polite audience. No wonder that the two songstresses should have had their heads turned by being made of such importance, and that each, inflamed by jealousy, and supported by a powerful party, should have thought of nothing but how to crush her hated rival. The demons of folly and malevolence were let loose in this party warfare. Private slander and public abuse were freely circulated; blows were struck, and the two interesting signoras fought!

A London poet of the last century, when called on, at short notice, to write something brilliant about a musician, was at no loss for a simile. Orpheus charming beasts into civility and inspiring stones with animation, was an illustration hanging on a peg, as it were, ready for use. In the *London Magazine* of that period, Handel is repeatedly compared to Orpheus. The party wits of the day were not behindhand in originality. The

following epigram was written on occasion of the Countess of Pembroke heading the Cuzzoni party, and encouraging them to catcall Faustina :—

“ Old poets sing that beasts did dance
Whenever Orpheus play'd ;
So to Faustina's charming voice
Wise Pembroke's asses bray'd.”

The analogous case of Orpheus was also cited in another epigram, on “the miracles wrought by Cuzzoni :”—

“ Boast not how Orpheus charmed the rocks,
And set a-dancing stones and stocks,
And tyger's rage appeas'd.
All this Cuzzoni has surpass'd ;
Sir Wilfred seems to have a taste,
And Smith and Gage are pleas'd.”

The directors of the Academy, not relishing these disputes, got rid of Cuzzoni by an ingenious expedient. When the time for a new contract with the singers came, they agreed to give Cuzzoni a salary less than that of Faustina, by one guinea ; whereupon Lady Pembroke, and some of her adherents, ardent friends of Cuzzoni, became furious, and made Cuzzoni take her oath upon the holy Gospels that she never would submit to take less than Faustina ; and so, as the directors were resolute, Cuzzoni, being obliged by her oath, was forced to leave her detested rival in possession of the field, and quitted England.

Dr. Arbuthnot, the friend of Pope, and Gay, and Swift, who had become acquainted with Handel on his first coming to England, at the house of Lord Burling-

ton, and who had been all along his steady friend, and a sincere admirer of his genius, published, in 1728, on occasion of these absurd contests, a humorous manifesto, entitled "The Devil to Pay at St. James's; or, a Full and True Account of a most Horrid and Bloody Battle between *Madame Faustina* and *Madame Cuzzoni*; Also, a Hot Skirmish between *Signor Boschi* and *Signor Palmerini*. Moreover, how *Senesino* has taken snuff, is going to leave the Opera, &c., &c."*

The result of these contentions, combined with other circumstances, was the destruction of the Academy; which, after tottering through a feverish existence for a couple of years, fell to the ground in the ninth year after its establishment.

Handel, acting in the fearless and independent spirit which always characterised him, when he found the theatre in the Haymarket abandoned by the singers, and unsupported by its former patrons, established, in 1728, a separate opera, at the same theatre; first, in conjunction with Heidegger, and afterwards on his own account and at his own risk. He went to Italy to engage a company of singers, who arrived in London in the autumn of 1729. He was unfortunate in his selection of singers; and his undertaking did not succeed, "though he exerted all the powers of his genius in its support."† Notwithstanding his former differences with Senesino, Handel re-engaged him on his return, in 1730.

In 1732, an event occurred which will ever be re-

* Arbutnot's Miscellanies, vol. i. Dr. Arbutnot was an accomplished musician. An anthem of his composition, "As pants the hart," is preserved at the Chapel Royal, in London.

† Hogarth.

garded as of singular interest in musical history, and which, in its consequences, was destined to exercise a mighty influence on the fame and fortunes of Handel. This was the performance by the Academy of Ancient Music* of the oratorio of *Esther*. This oratorio, the first that Handel ever wrote, or that was ever presented to an English audience, had been composed by him in the year 1720, during his engagement as *maestro di cappella* to the Duke of Chandos, at his princely seat of Cannons (the "Timon's Villa" of Pope), near Edgware. The words are ascribed either to Pope or Arbuthnot. Its production by the Academy was the first occasion of its being publicly performed.

The applause with which this beautiful oratorio was received, induced Handel to bring it out a few weeks later at the King's Theatre, in the Haymarket; when he advertised it as "The Sacred Story of *Esther*; an Oratorio in English, formerly composed by Mr. Handel, and now revised by him, with several additions." This undertaking met, for a while, with immense success; but, unfortunately for his own interests, Handel, flushed with triumph, raised the prices of admission on the oratorio nights, and thereby gave great additional offence to the subscribers to the opera.

To the success attending the production of this work, the world are in great measure indebted for that magnificent series of oratorios, which have rendered the name of Handel immortal. The idea was suggested to

* This Academy was instituted about the year 1710, under the direction of Dr. Pepusch, assisted by a number of amateur performers, and some of the most eminent masters of the time. The society, after a career of above eighty years, eminently beneficial to musical art, was dissolved in 1792.

him of devoting his talents to higher themes than those of Italian operas. Accordingly, though for several years afterwards he continued to write for the opera, yet he also, from time to time, presented to the public other compositions, both sacred and secular, to English words, including some of the noblest effusions of the great English poets. In 1733, he produced the oratorios of *Deborah* and *Athalia*, and two new operas.*

In this year, his differences with Senesino were renewed, and ended in a total rupture. Then the directors, and other eminent personages who had supported the Academy, being offended at the refusal of Handel to compose for Senesino (which they regarded as a piece of intolerable insolence and presumption), formed themselves into an association for the establishment of another opera, in opposition to Handel, and engaged Porpora as their composer. George II. and his Queen maintained all along a steady regard for Handel; but Frederick Prince of Wales (father of George III.) sided with the nobility.

And then ensued a long warfare between the two lyric institutes; the rival theatres of the musical drama. But the warfare differed widely from Handel's former rivalry with Bononcini. He had to encounter then, indeed, the cabals of a party, but not to the same extent or degree as now. No fair rivalry was now to be maintained: it could not be said that he had a rival in Porpora. A fair contest for fame is a benefit to all parties: it invigorates and developes their powers.

* During his early performances of oratorios, Handel first introduced his organ concertos, a species of music entirely of his own invention.

But the present contest could not be said to be for fame; the fame of Handel was already established. He had now to wrestle against a mighty movement of fashion, the resentment of the nobility, and the revenge and hatred of the principal singers. Perhaps it were better for him had he retired from the opera, and devoted his sublime genius exclusively to the composition of that class of works in which he has no equal. But the hour of his liberty was not yet come. With no pecuniary resources but his pensions* and the savings of former years, he proved but a feeble antagonist against the wealth, and numbers, and influence, arrayed at the other side. He continued the contest with a manly and intrepid spirit for several years. By some oversight, he omitted to engage the celebrated singer Farinelli, when he might have done so; and the consequence of this neglect was to invest his adversaries with additional power. The nobility engaged Farinelli, and Senesino, and Cuzzoni, and other great singers, and maintained their own opera at a theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields, with immense disadvantage to Handel; who, after the dissolution of the Academy, composed many operas, among which are some of his finest productions, but which were sometimes performed to almost empty houses.

In 1735, he produced *Alexander's Feast*, and revived the serenata of *Acis and Galatea*, formerly composed by him for the Duke of Chandos. In 1736, he produced *St. Cecilia's Ode*.

* Handel's pensions, three in number, amounted to £600 a-year; of which £200 were conferred on him by Queen Anne; £200, by George I.; and £200 for teaching the princesses, daughters of George II.—Hawkins's History of Music, vol. v. p. 411.

There is a fashion in music, as well as in more important things. * It became the fashion with a certain party to decry the compositions of Handel as contemptible, and unworthy of the notice of true connoisseurs. Such are the ethics of fashion. To the prevalence of this fashionable system of musical æsthetics Fielding alludes, in his novel of *Tom Jones* :—

“It was Mr. Western’s custom, every afternoon, as soon as he was drunk, to hear his daughter play on the harpsichord ; for he was a great lover of music, and perhaps, had he lived in town, might have passed for a connoisseur ; for he always excepted against the finest compositions of Mr. Handel. He never relished any music but what was light and airy ; and indeed his most favourite tunes were ‘ Old Sir Simon the King,’ ‘ St. George he was for England,’ ‘ Bobbing Joan,’ and some others.”

This movement of fashion and faction was strengthened by the conduct of Dr. Arne and Dr. Green, and other English musicians of that day, who, notwithstanding the inward reverence which some of them, at least, had for the abilities of Handel,* opposed themselves to him, as to a tyrant and usurper, against whom it was their duty to rebel. They tried to measure talents with him, but their competition was that of infants contending with a giant : they proved only feeble imitators. Their undoubted talents, and the position they occupied in the musical world, ought to have set them above the meanness of envy and detraction. The spirit in which they conducted their rivalry, and their concurrence in factions and cabals, contributed much at the

* Burney’s *History of Music*, vol. iv. p. 673.

time to the injury of Handel, who walked alone in his path of high art; and who (as he himself declared) "after he became master of the rudiments of his art, forbore to study the works of others, and ever made it a rule to follow the suggestions of his own fancy."*

Amid the thwartings of fashion, jealousy, and selfishness, Handel retained the friendship and admiration of several high-minded and discerning men. His friend Arbuthnot was not a man likely to be blown about by the winds of fashion. When Pope, who was not a musician, and was sceptical of the sincerity of the raptures of a musical audience, asked his serious opinion of Handel as a composer, he replied—"Conceive the very highest you can of his abilities, and they are much beyond anything you can conceive." In 1733, five years after the dissolution of the Academy, and when the adversaries of Handel were establishing their rival opera, he again undertook the defence of genius and of truth, by publishing another witty *brochure*, entitled "Harmony in an Uproar: A Letter to G——e F—d—k H—d—l, Esq., M——r of the O——a H——e, in the Haymarket, from Hurlothrumbo Johnson, Esq., Composer Extraordinary to all the Theatres in G——t B—t—n, excepting that of the Haymarket. In which the rights and merits of both O——s are properly considered."

In this pamphlet, the supposed writer informs Handel that he is "insolent, audacious, impudent, and saucy, and a thousand things else:" calls on him to "prostrate himself before his adversaries, and yield to their most unreasonable demands, and let them spurn

* Hawkins's History of Music, vol. v. p. 409.

and buffet him." Handel is then put on his trial, and desired to behave like a gentleman, and so save the Court time and trouble, by confessing himself guilty at once of "the following high crimes and misdemeanours committed upon the wills and understandings of our sovereign lord the nobility of Great Britain."

First—He is charged with having bewitched us for the space of twenty years past.

Secondly—With having most insolently dared to give us good music and sound harmony, when we wanted and desired bad.

Thirdly—With having most feloniously and arrogantly assumed to himself an uncontrolled property of pleasing us, whether we would or no ; and having often been so bold as to charm us, when we were positively resolved to be out of humour.

Handel pleads guilty of the whole charge.

Upon which the Court asks him what he has to say why sentence of annihilation should not be immediately pronounced against him, "for daring to oppose our mighty wills and pleasures?"

Handel urges, that "though he is guilty of the charge, he is as innocent of any crime as ignorant of any real accusation;" and asks, "wherein have I offended?"

The Court, in great wrath, exclaims—"Why, you saucy scoundrel, do you pretend to impeach the honour, sense, or power of the Court? Wherein have you offended!—Unparalleled audaciousness, when we have said you have offended. Sirrah, if you are not guilty by law, we'll prove it logically. No man is brought to this bar, but who is guilty. You are brought to this bar : ergo—do you understand a syllogism, rascal?—

I'll prove by substantial reasons that you are no composer, nor know no more of music than you do of algebra."

The proofs are, that he has taken no university degree like his enemies, Dr. Pushpin and Dr. Blue (Pepusch and Green), who laugh at him, and scorn to keep him company; that he never read Euclid, and refuses to be tied up by rules; that he once, in a country church, in singing the Psalms, put out the clerk and the whole congregation; that he made such music as man never did before, nor never will again; that he is a conjuror, and practises sorcery upon his Majesty's liege subjects; that the whole musical world is against him: one finding him deficient in softness, another in roughness; one vowing that he writes nothing pretty to tickle the ladies; and Dr. Green, that he is quite void of spirit and invention; and an Italian nobleman, that he knows nothing of harmony. Handel is accordingly ordered to be removed to the condemned hold, there to await the warrant for his execution.*

This amusing satire, written by a keen observer of human life, gives us, under a guise of irony and caricature, an accurate account, doubtless, of the opposition which Handel had to encounter. In 1737, both operas were broken up. The rage for Italian music, among the English, had in it much of the nature of affectation. It was, in great measure, a forced, factitious taste—a whim, prompted by curiosity and fashion; and many of its promoters returned gladly to the simpler strains of the *Beggars' Opera*. In losing for a while the amusement of the Italian Opera, the nobility only lost what

* Arbuthnot's *Miscellanies*, vol. ii.

they could easily replace. To Handel the consequences of the rivalry were more serious. In the course of this severe conflict, he was obliged to draw out of the funds almost the entire of the investments of his more prosperous days, amounting to about ten thousand pounds; while Farinelli, at the nobility's opera, was receiving the incense of an idolatrous flattery, and graciously condescending to accept diamond rings, and diamond buckles, and gold snuff-boxes, and bank notes enclosed in gold cases, as humble tributes from his worshippers. The profits of this singer amounted to five thousand pounds a-year. After some years he retired in great affluence to Bologna, where he built a house, and lived luxuriously. Senesino also retired in affluence, and built a handsome house at Vienna.

The health of Handel broke down under the weight of disappointment, neglect, and opposition. His singers, in his hour of distress, accepted bonds for the payment of their arrears—they were satisfied with his assurance that they should be discharged; and Handel, “who was a man of strict probity, and accustomed to pay his performers not only honestly but generously, discharged these debts very honourably, as soon as he was able.”* His pride and courage remained unconquered, but his health and spirits were for a while prostrated. His mind became disturbed; and his right hand was struck with palsy.† In the autumn of 1737, he went to Aix-la-Chapelle to try the effects of the vapour baths. A few essays of this hydropathic system completely removed his disorder. A few hours after his last bath, he went to the

* Burney.

† Burney's History of Music, vol. iv. p. 419. Hawkins, &c., &c.

great church of the city, and played on the organ in such admirable style that the Roman Catholics, forgetting for a moment in their delight, that the Almighty Father of man would never interfere for the recovery of a heretic, imputed his cure to a miracle.* After a stay of six weeks at the baths, he returned to London in November, in perfect health, and immediately resumed his professional labours. About three weeks after his return, he composed, for the funeral of Queen Caroline, the exquisite anthem, "When the ear heard her, then it blessed her;" which, in the judgment of Dr. Burney, is, "in expression, harmony, and pleasing effects, at the head of all his works."†

The last opera he ever composed for a set of singers in his own service, was *Berenice*, January, 1737.

We of the present day, with a century between us and Handel, are apt to regard the opposition to him

* Hawkins's History of Music. Handel and Sebastian Bach were the most renowned among the organists of the eighteenth century. Burney and Hawkins speak as wanting language to express their admiration of Handel's powers on that instrument; and of the grandeur, science, and perfection of his performance.

An amusing anecdote is related of Handel having once undertaken, in a crowded church, to play the final voluntary, or dismissal after the service, on a very fine organ there. The parish organist having with some reluctance consented, Handel seated himself at the organ and began. The congregation were so entranced with delight, that they all stopped in a body to listen to the effusions of the mighty master; till at length the parish organist, losing his temper, came impatiently forward, saying, with an air of contemptuous superiority—"You cannot dismiss a congregation! See, how soon I can disperse them!" And, sure enough, his performance had the desired effect.

† Burney's History of Music, vol. iv. p. 419.

during the Bononcini controversy, as very surprising, and almost unnatural. That Bononcini, whose name but for an accident would have been unknown to posterity, should have dared to dispute the palm with Handel, may seem to some of us a very strange state of affairs. We, to whom the name of Handel is a household word, and who, now when the lapse of a century has crowned his reputation with immortality, regard his genius and powers with a sentiment of awe, and assign him a place in the same class of minds as Milton and Michael Angelo, are apt to wonder that he should not have had an exclusive supremacy accorded to him. Assuredly, if ever musician had a right, which no musician or artist of any kind ever had, to such a distinction, it was Handel. But we forget, in our admiration for this transcendent genius, that with us his fame rests chiefly on the imperishable basis of his oratorios, and other compositions to English words—that any comparison between him and Bononcini can regard them only as writers of operas; that in this department of art, the merits of Bononcini are admitted even by those who assert the superiority of his great rival; and that their styles were totally different.* We forget that if Handel were con-

* Sir J. Hawkins says, that “the style of Bononcini was tender, elegant, and pathetic; Handel’s possessed all these qualities, and numberless others, and his invention was inexhaustible.”—*History of Music*, vol. v. p. 276. Dr. Burney, who, in his *Sketch of the Life of Handel*, prefixed to the “Account of the Commemoration in Westminster Abbey,” had spoken very highly of Bononcini, speaks thus of him in the fourth volume of his *History of Music*, published four years later:—“Tradition had filled my mind with ideas of his abilities, which the examination of his works has diminished; while a strict scrutiny into Handel’s productions has greatly augmented my veneration for that composer.”

temporary with ourselves, whether as a writer of operas or oratorios, he could not be invested with a supreme dictatorship in music. There would still be differences of taste, and different styles of composition. Some would give the preference to Bellini or Donizetti, to Mendelssohn, or Haydn, or Beethoven. Handel's peculiar style is not the only style of good music, any more than Milton's is the only canon or standard of good poetry. It is not the only mode of appealing through the medium of music to human feelings; for there are many feelings and trains of thought capable of being appealed to and expressed by music, besides those to which Handel has given such perfect and admirable expression. His music is not of the romantic school.

After making, however, all due allowance for differences of taste, it is impossible to excuse or palliate the violence and exclusiveness with which the partisans of these composers advocated their rival merits; thus turning questions of fine art into matter for feud, and contention, and party warfare, instead of treating them as subjects for calm and happy contemplation, whereon thinking men may differ. But, if in the feuds about Handel and Bononcini, we can detect some element of reasonableness, it is impossible to make a like admission or allowance for the conduct of the party who, after the fall of the Academy, set themselves in bitter and remorseless opposition to the fame and fortune of a man of worth and genius. Their proceedings will be comprehended only by those who have studied the philosophy of folly and the principles of fashion and party.

It seems an unfortunate circumstance in the career of Handel, that he should have been engaged in such a warfare. It disturbed his peace of mind, it embittered

his cup of life, and by agitating his spirit in mean and degrading contentions, depressed for a while the energy of his genius.* But his character came forth from the trial with very high claims to admiration. Throughout the many years of unprincipled and pitiless opposition and neglect, and amid the intrigues of his enemies, avowedly directed to the injury of his fame and fortunes, Handel, though often rough and impetuous in his manner, and sometimes, it may be, too imperious,† held a high moral position, which he never deserted. He was often made angry and indignant by (to quote his friend Arbuthnot again) “the unreasonable and savage proposals made to him; by which he was to give up all contracts, promises—nay, risk his fortune, to gratify fantastical whims and unjust piques;” but he never ceased to be a man of integrity and a lofty spirit.

He had his faults. He was fond of what is called good living, though not, it is said, to an injurious or degrading excess; and he was addicted to the use of profane expressions. A few ludicrous anecdotes of these failings have furnished repeated occasion for merriment, till they have seemed to some, who look no deeper than the surface, as if they represented the whole of Handel's character. Faults they were, no doubt, and he lived to repent of them. But Handel had brighter features in his character than these; he was not one of those

* Burney's *History of Music*, vol. iv. p. 426. Dr. Burney infers the temporary depression of Handel's vigour of mind from several passages in the manuscript score of his opera of *Xerxes*. And yet, the admirable funeral anthem for Queen Caroline was composed in November, only a month previous to *Xerxes*, which was begun December 26th, 1737.

† Burney.

miserable beings who fancy that artistic superiority atones for vice. "His social affections," says Hawkins, "were not very strong; and to this it may be imputed that he spent his whole life in a state of celibacy. That he had no female attachment of another kind, may be ascribed to a better reason.* Throughout his life, his character stood very high with all who knew him. By all his contemporaries who have recorded their testimony, he is described as a man of many virtues, of strict morality, "totally devoid of ill-nature or malevolence,"† and of large charity and generosity. These are moral characteristics of greater worth than artistic genius: without them, the man of highest talents is but "as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal," and will be comparatively little of a benefactor to mankind.

In 1738 (the year succeeding his return from Aix-la-Chapelle), Handel produced his fourth oratorio, *Israel in Egypt*. This superb composition met with so little encouragement from the public, that the receipts arising from its performance were not sufficient to remunerate him.

This year, he received a splendid tribute of admiration. His statue in marble, by Roubiliac, was erected in the garden of Vauxhall, at the sole expense of Mr. Tyers, the proprietor and conductor of the entertainments, who paid the further tribute of recording in the public papers, that he, "in consideration of the real merit of that inimitable master, thought it justice and propriety that his effigies should preside in that place where his harmony has so often charmed, even the

* Hawkins's History of Music, vol. v. p. 412.

† Burney.

greatest crowds, into the most profound silence and attention.”*

But the friendship of the discerning few could accomplish very little towards relieving him from his difficulties. He was now in great pecuniary straits. In the same year in which his statue was erected at Vauxhall, he was in danger of being arrested by the husband of Strada, one of his singers. His friends prevailed on him, with some difficulty, to take a benefit at the Opera-house in the Haymarket. A miscellaneous concert was performed, the theatre was crowded to excess, and Handel received about eight hundred pounds. But this could only afford him a temporary relief. Enmity and prejudice were still active to oppress him. His operas were often performed to empty houses, and his oratorios and other English works did not meet with support sufficient to indemnify him. Time was fleeting, and it was necessary, as he valued his own happiness and future welfare, that he should take some very decided step. Like Dante, he had been wandering for many years, in torture and bitter trial, in the—

“Selva selvaggia ed aspra e forte
Che nel pensier, rinnuova la paura,
Tanto e amara, che poco e piu morte.”†

It was necessary that he should quit this valley of the shadow of death, and emerge into a way of light and liberty. His conduct under the circumstances was marked with moral grandeur and intellectual power. Under the pressure of adverse fortunes, which might

* *London Daily Post*, April 18, 1738, quoted by Burney, *Hist. of Music*, vol. iv. p. 428.

† Dante, *Inferno*, canto i.

have sent a man of feebler resolution to his grave, or consigned him to an after life of querulous and brooding misanthropy, Handel rose superior to them all; and in the resources of his genius, found the means of placing himself in a position of freedom and independence.

He had for some time been meditating the exclusive application of his talents to the composition of sacred music; of which (besides his oratorios) he had already given several admirable specimens to the world. In the year 1713, he had composed by order of Queen Anne, a grand *Te Deum* and *Jubilate*,* in celebration of the peace of Utrecht. During his engagement to the Duke of Chandos, he had composed several anthems and services. For the coronation of George II. he had composed (to words of his own selection) the anthems, including *Zadok the Priest*. In 1737, he had written the beautiful anthem for the funeral of the Queen. His powers in sacred composition were thus already proved; and he felt himself equal to the production of works which, in spite of present opposition or neglect, the world would not willingly let die. With this consciousness of his extraordinary powers, he came, gradually, no doubt, to the resolution of finally abandoning all further concern with the opera, and of dedicating his energies exclusively to higher aims.

He was wont to say, that the composing of sacred music was an employment "better suited to the circumstances of a man advancing in years, than that of adapting music to such vain and trivial words as the musical drama generally consists of."† This was true; but

* This was the only *Jubilate* Handel ever composed.

† Hawkins's *Hist. of Music*, vol. v. p. 354.

other reasons concurred to influence him. A musician of his peculiar bent of intellect, with a sublimity of genius equal to that of Milton, must have felt that the subjects of the operas afforded no theme commensurate with the grandeur of his conceptions. The man who could conceive the music of the choruses—"The Lord shall reign for ever and ever," "For unto us a child is born," "Hallelujah," "Blessing and honour, glory and power," must have felt that the dramas and romances of the mere worldly life of man were equally insufficient to supply suitable themes for such music as for the "Paradise Lost" of Milton. Let any one consider the poetical sentiments awakened in his own mind by the contemplation, or by the presentation in a theatre, of those incidents of human life which concern this transitory scene only—let him consider the kind of music appropriate to, and expressive of these sentiments; and let him then recall to his mind the music of the *Messiah*, and he will recognise in it strains of a lofty sublimity, which it would be absurd and extravagant to use as expressive of any merely mundane sentiment.* Handel, who was well versed in the Scriptures, perceived what noble subjects they afforded for the exercise of his best abilities; and, notwithstanding the vast range and versatility of his powers, must have felt the peculiar congeniality of such themes to the highest inspirations of his genius.

* Some interesting remarks on the fitness of the Bible to the nature of man, as endowed with *imagination*, and among other branches of it, with the musical faculty, occur in a lecture delivered before the Young Men's Christian Association, by the Rev. Hugh MacNeile, D.D., on "The Bible: its Provision and Adaptation for the Moral Necessities of Fallen Man."

In 1739, he produced *L'Allegro ed il Penseroso*; and in 1740, the oratorio of *Saul*. In 1740, though nearly ruined, he benevolently gave a performance of his *Acis and Galatea* for the benefit of the Fund for the support of Decayed Musicians.

The last works he wrote to Italian words were, the opera of *Deidamia*, first performed in January, 1740; and an operetta called *Hymen*, which was twice performed in November, in the same year.*

The oratorio of *Saul* shared the fate of its magnificent predecessor, *Israel in Egypt*. It met with no encouragement from the London public; and Handel, suffering under such severe and repeated disappointments, felt that his most prudent course was to withdraw for a while to another sphere of action, where, amid new associations, his works "would be out of the reach of enmity and prejudice."† Whether or not he had ever previously revolved such a plan in his mind, it is certain that special circumstances did, about this time, offer him a friendly beckoning across the Irish Channel, and direct his views to Dublin, as a place of temporary and advantageous retreat. Warned by bitter experience, when he came to contemplate the composition of his sixth oratorio, the *Messiah*, in 1741, he was natu-

* The operas of Handel, in common with all the dramatic music of his day, are consigned to oblivion. By those critics of later times who have studied them, they are said to contain a treasury of beauties. The few of his opera songs familiar to the modern ear, have been rescued from neglect by being set to sacred words. The beautiful air in *Rodelinda*, "Dove sei amato bene," is commonly known by its adaptation to the words, "Holy, holy Lord God Almighty." The air in *Sosarmes*, "Rendi sereno al ciglio," is now only known as "Lord remember David."

† Burney.

rally unwilling to submit conceptions so grand and noble to the caprices of fashion and the malignity of party in London; and he wisely embraced an opportunity which was opened to him of producing this great work in the Irish metropolis, under singularly favourable auspices. He determined to try whether by residing for a while in a city which seemed to smile on him from afar, as a friend in his troubles, and by performing his music, and producing his new oratorio there, he might not achieve a success, which would effect a permanent change in his fortunes. The special circumstances which directed the views of Handel to Ireland as the scene of this experiment, were, so far as I have been able to trace them, the following:—

He was invited to Ireland by the Lord Lieutenant. This appears from an advertisement (published after Handel had been more than two months resident in Dublin) in *Pue's Occurrences*,* of January 30th, to February 3rd, 1742, in which we read, that there was then in the press, and shortly to be published:—

“A Poem by Laurence Whyte on the General Effect and Excellency of Musick, particularly, on the famous Mr. Handel's performance, who has been lately invited into this Kingdom, by his Grace the Duke of Devonshire, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, for the Entertainment of the Nobility and Gentry.”

The Duke had been invested with the Viceregal dignity in 1737; and had spent several periods of time subsequently in England. He had returned to Ireland on the 23rd of September, 1741.† His invitation was,

* *Pue's Occurrences*, first published in the year 1700, was the first newspaper ever established in Dublin. It was printed at Dick's Coffee-house, in Skinner-row, now called Christ Church-place, and published on Tuesdays and Saturdays.

† *Faulkner's Journal*, Sept. 22nd to 26th, 1741.

of course, a strong inducement to Handel to visit Dublin.

Communications had passed between Handel and the members or governors of three benevolent institutions in Dublin—namely, the Charitable Musical Society for the Relief of Imprisoned Debtors, Mercer's Hospital, and the Charitable Infirmary. The result of these communications was to open to Handel, when he was contemplating the composition of the *Messiah*, an opportunity of bringing it out in Dublin, with every certainty of encouragement and success; and he composed the oratorio with the intention, or engagement, to give the first performance of it for the benefit of these charities.

The evidence for such negotiations having passed between Handel and parties in Dublin, previously to his leaving London, consists in the following facts:—

1. Handel composed the *Messiah* only a few weeks before he set out on his journey to Ireland. According to memoranda in Handel's own handwriting, in the original score of the oratorio, which is preserved in the Royal Library at Buckingham Palace, the writing or composition of the oratorio, was commenced on the 22nd of August, 1741, and the first part was finished on the 28th of the same month. The second part (which terminates with the *Hallelujah chorus*) was finished on the 6th of September. At the end of the third part, (which concludes the work) is the memorandum:—“*Fine dell Oratorio. G. F. Handel* (the astronomical sign for Saturday), *September 12th, 1741.*”* 2. In

* Dr. Burney, who notices the uncommon minuteness and exactitude of Handel in dating all his manuscripts, observes that it was his custom to mark the days of the week with astronomical signs.—*Hist. of Music*, vol. iv. p. 435. After the memorandum dated “Sep-

a notice appended to the account which appears in *Faulkner's Journal*, of the rehearsal of the *Messiah* on the 8th of April, 1742, in the hall of the Charitable Musical Society, previously to its performance for the benefit of the three charitable institutions, we find the expression (applied to the three charities collectively)—“This noble and grand charity, *for which this Oratorio was composed.*”*

Handel arrived in Dublin on the 18th of November, 1741. Allowing about a fortnight, including his delay at Chester, for his journey from London to Dublin, he must have quitted London on or about the 4th of November.

It appears, then, that the manuscript of the *Messiah* was finished about seven weeks before Handel set out for Ireland. And when he had been resident for nearly five months in Dublin, we find him, on the occasion of his giving the *first* performance of this oratorio for the benefit of the three charities, authorising or permitting the public announcement that it had been composed for “*this noble and grand charity.*”

It is evident from these facts, that Handel, besides those inquiries which it was necessary for him to make before taking so important and responsible a step as

tember 12th,” is another memorandum, in German, signifying that the work was filled up or completed on the 14th inst.

* Even if no special evidence existed, it could never be supposed that Handel came to Ireland without instituting *some* previous inquiries, and communicating previously with some person in Dublin. That among these communications there were negotiations for composing the *Messiah*, and giving the first performance of it for certain charities in Dublin, is a fact proved by this notice in *Faulkner's Journal*; the merit of the discovery of which, after much research, belongs (as I have stated in the preface) to Mr. George Finlayson.

coming a long journey (for such it was in those days), bringing performers with him to a city where he was a stranger, had also been in communication with the friends or governors of the three charities, on the subject of a performance of his music for the benefit of those charities. These noblemen and gentlemen had, doubtless, expressed their hope that the proposed visit of the great musician to their city might be made available towards increasing the funds of their several benevolent institutions ; and Handel, it is evident, had, with his wonted liberality, undertaken, or expressed his willingness to compose for them, and to place the first performance of his work at their service. It is also evident that only a few weeks before he came to Ireland, he wrote the *Messiah*, in pursuance of such undertaking.*

It will be seen, however, from an entry in the minute-book of Mercer's Hospital (dated January 23, 1742), that any such offer or undertaking on Handel's part was only conditional, and that he reserved to himself a right of withholding a performance of this oratorio till certain arrangements should be made.

It is a remarkable circumstance that the tradition of more than a century, handed down from writer to writer, has mentioned only the relief of the prisoners as the object for which the performance was given, but has been silent as to the two other charities.

* In the absence of further evidence, many particulars must be left to conjecture ; but what I suppose to have been the case is, that the invitation of the Lord Lieutenant first suggested to Handel the idea of performing his music in Ireland ;—that when the idea was suggested to him, by this or by any other means, he proceeded to make all needful preliminary inquiries of some friend in Dublin ;—that the news of his intention to visit the Irish capital soon became known to the friends of the charities, and that these gentlemen then communicated their wishes to him.

The Charitable Musical Society had been in active operation for several years before Handel came to Ireland. It is frequently mentioned in *Faulkner's Journal* as "The Charitable Musical Society for the benefit and enlargement of poor distressed prisoners for debt in the several Marshalseas of the City of Dublin." Its original place of meeting was the Bull's Head Tavern, in Fishamble-street,* from whence the members removed to their great Music-Hall in the same street, on its completion in 1741.

At that time, there existed in Dublin several other charitable musical societies, established for other benevolent purposes: as "The Charitable Musical Society held at the Bear on College-green;" "The Charitable and Musical Society in Vicar's-street for enlarging the fund for the reception of sick and wounded poor of this kingdom into Dr. Steevens's Hospital;" "The Charitable Musical Society in Crow-street;" "The Musical Society in Warburgh-street."† But, from whatever cause, the Society who built the Music-Hall in Fishamble-street seems to have had a sort of pre-eminence accorded to it among the other charitable musical societies of Dublin. When any one of the other contemporary societies is mentioned in the public journals, it is invariably designated by its special place of meeting;

* Whitelaw's Hist. of Dublin; *Pue's Occurrences*. On the removal of the Society to their new Hall, another Charitable Musical Society assembled at the Bull's Head.—*Dublin News-Letter*, Dec. 18th to 21st, 1742.

† *Faulkner's Journal* and other Dublin newspapers of the time; from which it appears also that charitable musical societies were about this time established in some of the provincial towns—Cork, Drogheda, &c.

while this particular society is generally called simply, and, as it were, *par excellence*, "THE CHARITABLE MUSICAL SOCIETY." It is, however, frequently designated with reference to the special object of its institution; and is sometimes described as "The Charitable Musical Society in Fishamble-street," and "The Musical Society at Mr. Neil's room in Fishamble-street."*

The condition of prisoners confined in Irish jails was in those days, fully as miserable and unworthy of a Christian country as that of prisoners throughout England and Scotland at the same time. The circumstances which called for the institution of the Charitable Musical Society in Dublin, were precisely those which, many years afterwards, invited the benevolent labours of the celebrated John Howard. Howard visited Dublin, on his errand of mercy, in the year 1775, and has recorded his testimony to the same deplorable condition of its prisons as he had witnessed elsewhere. It was not till later times, that the progress of enlightened Christian principles caused the enactment of many important laws for the reformation of prison discipline.

It is difficult for us, who live in an age of rational and humane legislation, to image to ourselves the mournful condition of those unfortunate beings, who, in times not very remote from our own, were cast into our prisons for some trifling debt, and there left to pine in hopeless misery, without medical aid, and without food, save

* William Neale, a music-publisher, and Treasurer of the Charitable Musical Society, had incurred some expense in the building of the Music-Hall, which probably gave occasion to its being sometimes called 'Mr. Neale's (or Neil's) music-room.' He memorialled the Society, in 1742, on the subject of his expenses.—*Dublin News-Letter*, March 1st to 5th, 1742.

from the casual hand of charity. The pages of *Faulkner's Journal* abound with accounts of the sufferings of the imprisoned debtors in the several Marshalseas of Dublin, as well as of prisoners throughout Ireland. The deaths of "two prisoners in the Four Courts Marshalsea, for extreme want," are recorded.* Appeals to public generosity are frequently inserted from the prisoners, as being in the most wretched condition, having no food or other necessities of life. Faulkner often acknowledges the receipt from benevolent individuals, of small sums of money, which he distributed to some of the prisoners—a few pence to each. Many were only saved from starvation by charitable distributions of daily bread.† Of the mode of proceeding of the Charitable Musical Society in relieving this deplorable condition of the imprisoned debtors of Dublin, and of their recent labours, the following account is inserted in *Faulkner's Journal*, of March 14th to 17th, 1740-1:—

"The Committee of the Charitable Musical Society appointed for this year to visit the Marshalseas in this City, and release the Prisoners confined therein for debt, have already released 188 miserable persons of both sexes. They offered a reasonable Composition to the Creditors. And many of the Creditors being in circumstances almost equally miserable with their Debtors, due regard was paid by the Committee to this Circumstance."

Other similar notices from the Society occur from time to time in the pages of *Faulkner*. Besides compounding the debts of the prisoners, the committee used also to compound the fees which, in those days, were due to the jailor, and without settling which, a prisoner

* *Faulkner's Journal*, March 17th to 21st, 1740.

† *Faulkner's Journal*, July 7th to 11th, 1741.

would not have been set at liberty, even after payment of the debt for which he suffered imprisonment.

With a view to the furtherance of their benevolent designs, some of the members of the Society subscribed for the building of the Music-Hall;* the proceeds of concerts in which, as well as the hire of the Hall for other purposes, went to augment their funds. A play was also sometimes performed for the benefit of the prisoners, by appointment of the Society, at the theatre in Smock-alley.†

The opening of the Music-Hall, in Fishamble-street, was an advantageous circumstance for Handel, in the event of his visiting Dublin. It seems to have been the finest apartment which had as yet been erected in Dublin for musical performances. It was called "The Great Music-Hall;" and besides the usual concerts and festive assemblies held in it, was much used on occasions when a large orchestra was required, and when it was desirable to assemble a numerous audience, as in performances of oratorios for public charities. For many years it was the principal public assembly-room of Dublin. Handel, after experience of his first concert in this Music-Hall, was much pleased with it, and described it as a "charming room," in which the music sounded delightfully. It may easily be supposed, that information received by him of the building and opening

* *Faulkner's Journal*, October 27th to 31st, 1741.

† *Faulkner's Journal*, November 21st to 24th, 1741. In the year 1839 the name of Smock-alley was changed to that of Essex-street, West. On part of the site of the old theatre the Roman Catholic chapel of St. Michael and St. John has been built—adjacent to which are still some remains of the theatre. Garrick, who often performed here, came to Dublin during Handel's visit.

of this great room concurred with other inducements to bring him to Dublin. The Music Hall was first opened to the public about four weeks before he set out on his journey for Ireland.*

Mercer's Hospital and the Charitable Infirmary were among the earliest of the many benevolent medical institutions of Dublin. The Infirmary, the elder of the two, was the first infirmary ever established in Dublin. It was planned in 1723, and opened in 1728, at the sole expense of six surgeons. At the time of Handel's visit, it occupied a portion of the site on the Inn's-quay, on which the noble pile of the Four Courts has since been erected. On this site formerly stood the monastery of St. Saviour, the buildings of which, after the surrender of the monastery to Henry VIII., were for many years used as the Inns of Court, or King's Inns :—hence the name of the Inn's Quay. When the site of the Four Courts was determined on, the infirmary was transferred, in 1792, to Jervis-street, where it has remained ever since. The books of the infirmary in Jervis-street contain no record of so early a date as the visit of Handel to Dublin.

Mercer's Hospital, in Stephen-street, was founded by Mrs. Mary Mercer, in 1734. It has always maintained a high rank among the hospitals and schools of surgery and medicine in Dublin. To the benevolent zeal of the early governors of this institution was owing the first introduction of the sacred compositions of Handel to the people of Dublin. For some years previous to his visit to Ireland a grand musical performance had been given annually in St. Andrew's (the Round)

* *Faulkner's Journal*, September 29th to October 3rd, 1741.—Whitelaw, *Hist. of Dublin*.

Church, for the benefit of the hospital, under the direction of the governors. On these occasions some of Handel's sacred music was always performed. Noblemen and gentlemen of rank and influence officiated as stewards; the Lord Lieutenant and Lords Justices usually attended in state; the service was performed in the cathedral manner, with the assistance of the choirs of Christ Church and St. Patrick's; and a sermon was preached for the charity. The manuscript parts, vocal and instrumental, of the Utrecht *Te Deum*, *Jubilate*, and *Coronation anthems* by Handel, and of anthems by Boyce* and Green, which were used by the performers on these occasions, are still preserved in Mercer's Hospital, together with instrumental music by Handel, Boyce, and other composers; some of it marked with the stamp of the Dublin Philharmonic Society of the time.†

* An entry in the minute-book of Mercer's Hospital, dated January 2nd, 1741-2, records a vote of thanks from the Board of Governors "to Mr. Boyce, for the anthem he favoured us with for the last performance in St. Andrew's Church." Probably this was Boyce's anthem, "Blessed is he that considereth the sick and needy," which is among the music preserved at Mercer's.

† A Philharmonic Society and an Academy of Music existed in Dublin at the time of Handel's visit. In 1730, the Academy built a music-hall in Crow-street, for the practice of Italian music—an idea suggested by the prevailing fashion in London.—Whitelaw, *Hist. of Dublin*; Walker, *Historical Memoirs of the Irish Bards*, Appendix, p. 158. On the site of this hall, in 1752, was erected the Crow-street Theatre, which for many years was the principal theatre of Dublin, but has long ceased to exist. Both of these musical societies used to assist at the performances for Mercer's Hospital. In the list of subscribers to Handel's twelve grand concertos, published in 1739, is the "Academy of Music at Dublin, two sets." The room of the Philharmonic Society was in Fishamble-street.

The minute-books of Mercer's Hospital, containing entries so early as January, 1738, and down to December, 1768, have been carefully preserved, and throw some light on the subject of Handel's visit to Dublin. They contain some curious memorials of the manners and local history of the times.

It was only natural that the governors and benefactors of these three noble institutions should welcome the advent of Handel to their city with joy. Already they had had frequent occasion of witnessing the power of his sublime music to attract a numerous auditory, year after year. Mercer's Hospital had been largely benefited by the annual performances, chiefly of his works, at St. Andrew's. The movements of fashion in London had not affected the estimation in which the merits of Handel, as a composer of the highest order, were held by the people of Dublin. They had heard his music, and were astonished and delighted; and the friends of the charities knew that a performance conducted by the great composer himself would prove eminently attractive, and would ensure large benefit to the charities.

As to the medium through which communications between Handel and the friends of the charities in Dublin were carried on, I can only offer conjecture. At that time, Matthew Dubourg, the favourite scholar of the celebrated Geminiani,* and an excellent musician and performer on the violin, of whom Dr. Burney remarks, that his "performance and conduct had acquired him

* Geminiani came to Dublin in 1761, and died there in September, 1762, at his lodgings in College-green, in the 96th year of his age. *Pue's Occurrences*, Sept. 18th to 21st, 1762.

many friends,"* resided in Dublin. He there held the office, to which he had been appointed in 1728, of composer and master of his Majesty's band of music in Ireland. In this capacity, he always set to music the customary Ode for the King's Birthday, performed before the Viceregal Court at the Castle. Since his appointment, Dublin had been his place of residence; but from the year 1735, when he was taken into the service of the Prince of Wales, he had frequently visited England.† Whitelaw calls him the "friend,"‡ and Walker, the "associate"§ of Handel. It is certain that Handel found the vast advantage of having a brother musician so popular and so eminent in his profession, resident in Dublin; and that, during his visit, Dubourg acted as his friend and associate in his musical transactions.

In any negotiations between Handel and parties in Dublin, as well as in the preliminary inquiries which it

* Hist. of Music, vol. iv. p. 651.

† Burney, Hist. of Music, vol. iv. p. 651.

‡ Hist. of Dublin.

§ Historical Memoirs of the Irish Bards, Appendix, p. 159. In this work, Mr. Walker relates an anecdote of Dubourg. That eminent performer had often desired to witness the sport and humours of an Irish fair; and an opportunity of gratifying his wish occurred when he was on a visit at a Mr. Lindsay's, in the town of Dunboyne, near Dublin, during a great fair. Having disguised himself as an itinerant fiddler, he sallied forth among the tents, in one of which he was soon engaged to play for a company of rustic dancers. He endeavoured to play *in character*, that is to say, badly and discordantly. But try as he would, he could not succeed in his new character of *fiddler*. The dancers were arrested with surprise at the sweet tones of his violin; and the audience crowded so about him, that he was glad to make his escape.

was necessary for him to make before he finally resolved on going to Ireland, it was an obvious advantage to him to have such a person as Dubourg resident on the spot. Dubourg, who for thirteen years had occupied a distinguished position in the musical profession in Dublin, was well qualified to act as a medium of communication between Handel and the friends or authorities of the three charities; and it seems probable that it was through him that such communications, previously to Handel's coming to Ireland, were carried on. He was most capable of giving Handel every information necessary for his guidance, when his views were first directed to Ireland. He, of all men, could best inform him of the state of the musical profession in Dublin; what kind of orchestra he might expect to find; and what arrangements (such as the engaging of performers in England) he ought to make previously, in the event of his coming to Dublin. He could also inform him of the objects of the Charitable Musical Society, and of the building and opening of their new Music-Hall; as well as of any other circumstances, such as the performances for the benefit of Mercer's Hospital, which might indicate that his music stood higher in public favour in Dublin than in London. But that Dubourg was the person who made these communications to Handel is only offered here as a probable conjecture.

What is ascertained by the foregoing evidence, is, that the special circumstances inducing Handel to visit Ireland were:—the invitation of the Lord Lieutenant; the advantage of having Dubourg resident in Dublin; the opening of the Great Music-Hall; and the negotiations into which he had entered with the friends of the three charitable institutions.

Dr. Burney thought it probable that Handel's departure for Ireland was precipitated by the information he had received, that the Earl of Middlesex had taken on himself the office of *Impresario** of Italian operas, and engaged the King's Theatre, in the Haymarket, with a new band of singers, and Galuppi as composer.† If this were so, it would only prove that Handel's resolution to quit the opera was not yet so completely matured as to leave him without a doubt. If he needed an event like this to confirm his resolution, and if, as he retired from the scenes of his earlier years, where he had acquired so much glory, and where he had suffered so severely, a faint sentiment of regret, and wish to return, still lingered in his breast, it was fortunate for him, and for the world, that its vacillations should have been thus terminated for ever. However this may have been, Lord Middlesex entered on his managerial duties in 1741, and the opera was opened on the 31st of October, a few weeks after Handel had finished writing the *Messiah*, and when he was on the point of setting out for Dublin. He was present at the first opera, and describes the recollection of it to have furnished him with much amusement in his journey to Ireland.

His visit "to the Hibernian shore" was an important and influential event in his life. He came, wearied and disgusted with his contentions and disappointments in London, and at a time when a great change was taking place in his character and sentiments. It proved a fortunate visit for him. He found Dublin, not less a haven of repose, than a scene of triumph and unmingled applause.

On his way to Ireland, he was detained for several

* Manager, undertaker. † Hist. of Music, vol. iv. p. 445.

days at Chester, by contrary winds, which prevented his embarkation at Park-gate, a village a few miles below the city of Chester, on the north shore of the river Dee, from whence, in those days, the packet-boats generally sailed for Dublin.* Dr. Burney, whose genius for music had already manifested itself, was then a schoolboy at Chester. His curiosity was excited by the presence of the celebrated musician, and he watched, with all the ardour of youthful enthusiasm, all the proceedings of Handel, as long as he remained in the city. With a feeling that will be readily understood, he records his remembrance of seeing him smoke a pipe over a dish of coffee, at the Exchange Coffee-house. Handel took advantage of the delay, "to prove some books that had been hastily transcribed, by trying the choruses which he intended to perform in Ireland."† On applying to Mr. Baker, organist of the cathedral, to know if there were any members of the choir who could sing at sight, Mr. Baker mentioned some of the most likely singers then in Chester, and among them a printer of the name of Janson, who had a good bass voice, and was one of the best musicians in the choir. A time was appointed for a private rehearsal at the Golden Falcon, where Handel was staying; and, as Dr. Burney informs us that Chester was then a very musical place, and besides making special mention of Harry Alcock as a good first violin, relates that eighteen or twenty performers, amateurs

* Contrary winds sometimes compelled vessels between Dublin and Park-gate, to put into Holyhead for shelter; and some travellers seem to have preferred coming on by land to Holyhead, and embarking there for Dublin.

† Burney.

and professors, were wont to assemble at a weekly concert at Mr. Prebendary Prescott's, we may assume that a band mustered pretty strong to try Handel's manuscripts. On trial of the chorus in the *Messiah*, "And with his stripes we are healed," poor Janson, after attempting his part several times, failed so egregiously, that Handel burst into a rage, and after vociferating in four or five languages, exclaimed in broken English, "You schautrel ! tit you not dell me dat you could sing at soite ?" "Yes, Sir," replied the unfortunate basso, "and so I can ; but not at *first sight*."*

Meanwhile Handel was expected in Dublin. The last packet from England had arrived on the 5th of November,† but so long afterwards did adverse winds prevail, that on the 17th of the month, we read in *Faulkner*—"Five British packets due this day." On the next day, however, the long-looked-for packet-boat arrived, laden with arrears of news from England, and bringing Handel to the Irish shore.

Amid the insertions of pieces of tardy intelligence brought by this vessel, in the number of *Faulkner's Journal* published on the ensuing Saturday, is the following paragraph, extracted, of course, from some Chester journal :—

"Chester, Nov. 5.—Yesterday arrived here in his way to Dublin, Mr. Maclaine, who was invited to play on our Cathedral Organ, this day, on which he performed so well, to the entire Satisfaction of the whole Congregation, that some of the best Judges in Musick said, They never heard that Organ truly played on before ; and his Performance was allowed to be very masterly and in the finest Taste."

* Burney, Sketch of the Life of Handel.

† *Faulkner's Journal*, Nov. 3rd to 7th, 1741.

In the same number of *Faulkner*, immediately after the above paragraph, the arrival of Handel in Dublin, is announced as follows:—

“And last Wednesday,* the celebrated Dr. Handell arrived here in the Packet-boat from Holyhead, a Gentleman universally known by his excellent Compositions in all kinds of Musick, and particularly for his *Te Deum*, *Jubilate*, *Anthems*, and other Compositions in Church Musick, (of which for some years past have principally consisted the Entertainments in the Round Church, which have so greatly contributed to support the Charity of Mercer’s Hospital) to perform his Oratorios, for which Purpose he hath engaged the above Mr. Maclaine, his Wife, and several others of the best Performers in the Musical Way.”†

In *Pue’s Occurrences*, the arrival of Handel is thus noticed:—

“Wednesday last, arrived here from London, the celebrated Dr. Handell, Universally known by his excellent compositions in all kinds of Musick, he is to perform here this Winter, and has brought over several of the best performers in the Musical Way.”‡

In the same number of *Faulkner* which announces that Handel had set foot upon the Irish shore, the following surly notice of the opening of the opera in London is inserted amid the arrears of news which had been accumulating at the other side of the Channel,

* November 18th, 1741.

† *Faulkner’s Journal* of Tuesday, Nov. 17th, to Saturday, 21st, 1741.

It is a mistake to call Handel, “*Doctor*.” He never took any University degree.

‡ *Pue’s Occurrences*, Nov. 17th to 21st, 1741.

under the influence of the same contrary winds that had delayed the voyage of the great composer :—

“ Last Saturday* the Operas began in the Haymarket, but the principal Singer and principal dancer did not perform. There was a prodigious Audience, and a prodigious Expense; for it is said the whole charge of the Operas for six Months, will come to upwards of £16,000. Is not Britain then in a fine state when, notwithstanding our Taxes, we can fling away such a sum on a Parcel of squeaking, capering, fiddling, Italians, and Foreign Buffoons?”

On the fourth day after Handel's arrival, the following entry appears in the minute-book of Mercer's Hospital :—

“ At a meeting of the Trustees of Mercer's Hospital, Nov. 21st, 1741.

“ Present,—John Putland Esq. Deane Owen.† Dr. Wynne.‡ Ld. Bpp. of Corck.§

“ Ordered that Messrs. Putland, Owen, and Wynne, be and are desired to wait on Mr. Handel to ask the favour of him to play on the Organ at the Musical Performance in St. Andrew's Church.

“ E. J. MATURIN, Secretary.”

This performance was one of those already mentioned as being given annually for the benefit of Mercer's Hospital. The music consisted of the Utrecht *Té Deum*

* October 31st.

† John Owen, D.D., Dean of Clonmacnois, and a Prebendary of Christ Church, Dublin.

‡ Rev. John Wynne, Precentor and Sub-Dean of St. Patrick's.

§ Robert Clayton, D.D., a munificent and learned prelate. He had been a Fellow of Trinity College, Dublin, and was successively Bishop of Killala, Cork, and Clogher. His bust, in marble, is placed in the College Library.

and *Jubilate* by Handel, and other sacred music.* It took place on Thursday, the 10th of December following; but whether Handel attended at it, or took any part in it, I find no evidence.

In *Faulkner's Journal* of November 24th to 28th, the arrival of one of Handel's performers is announced as follows :—

“Last Tuesday† arrived in the Yacht from Park-gate, Signiora Avolio, an excellent Singer, who comes to this Kingdom to perform in Mr. Handel's Musical Entertainment.”

Mrs. Cibber, who sung at Handel's concerts, must have arrived in Dublin about this time; as her appearance on the 12th of December, at the Theatre Royal, in Aungier-street, in the part of Indiana in *The Conscious Lovers*, is advertised in *Faulkner*, as “being the first time of her performance in this kingdom.”‡ She acted the part of Indiana, on February 9th, 1742, for the benefit of the Charitable Infirmary; and appeared in several other characters during her stay in Dublin.§

The first advertisement issued by Handel, after his arrival in Dublin, appears in *Faulkner's Journal* of December 8th to 12th, 1741 :—

“On Monday next, being the 14th of December, (and every Day following) Attendance will be given at Mr. Handel's House

* *Faulkner's Journal*, Nov. 17th to 21st, 1741.

† Nov. 24th.

‡ *Faulkner's Journal*, Dec. 8th to 12th, 1741.

§ In the *Gentleman's Magazine* for March, 1742, are some laudatory verses “To Mrs. Cibber, on her acting in Dublin.” Mrs. Cibber lodged in Aungier-street, and Signora Avolio in Strand-street.

in Abbey-street, near Lyffey-street, from 9 o'clock in the Morning till 2 in the Afternoon, in order to receive the Subscription Money for his Six Musical Entertainments in the New Musick Hall in Fishamble street, at which Time each Subscriber will have a Ticket delivered to him, which entitles him to three Tickets each Night, either for Ladies or Gentlemen. N.B. Subscriptions are likewise taken in at the same Place.”*

Handel's next advertisement appears in *Faulkner's Journal* of December 15th to 19th, 1741 :—

“ At the new Musick Hall in Fishamble Street, on Wednesday next, being the 23d day of December, Mr. Handel's Musical Entertainments will be opened, at which will be performed, *L' Allegro il Penseroso*, and *il Moderato*, with two Concertos for several Instruments, and a Concerto on the Organ. To begin at 7 o'clock. Tickets for that Night will be delivered to the Subscribers (by sending their Subscription Ticket) on Tuesday and Wednesday next at the Place of Performance, from 9 o'clock in the Morning till 3 in the Afternoon. Books will be sold at the said Place, Price a British Sixpence. And Attendance will be given this Day and on Monday next at Mr. Handel's House,” &c., &c.

(Then follows a repetition of the first advertisement.)

The second advertisement is repeated in the succeeding number of *Faulkner*,† with the addition—

“ And no body can be admitted without a Subscriber's Ticket. The Subscribers that have not sent in their Subscription money, are humbly desired to send it To-day or To-morrow morning, in order to receive their Subscription Ticket.‡”

Il Moderato, mentioned in this advertisement, is a third part, or sequel, to *L' Allegro ed il Penseroso*. The

* Repeated in *Faulkner's Journal*, Dec. 12th to 15th, 1741.

† Dec. 19th to 22nd.

The amount of a subscription for the six concerts is not mentioned.

words are elegantly written, and recommend the pleasures of "Moderation in all things," as the pleasures of Mirth and Melancholy had been previously advocated in Milton's two poems. It concludes with the chorus—

"Thy pleasures, Moderation, give ;
In them, alone, we truly live."

That this performance was well received, will be easily imagined by those who are acquainted with the exquisite music which Handel has "Married to the immortal verse" of Milton. The reception which the concert met with, on this first introduction of Handel to a Dublin audience, is described in the following notice in *Faulkner* :—

"Last Wednesday, Mr. Handel had his first Oratorio at Mr. Neal's Musick Hall in Fishamble street, which was crowded with a more numerous and polite Audience than ever was seen upon the like Occasion. The Performance was superior to any thing of the kind in the Kingdom before ; and our Nobility and Gentry, to shew their Taste for all kinds of Genius, expressed their great Satisfaction, and have already given all imaginable Encouragement to this grand Musick."*

A few days after this concert, Handel wrote the following account of his proceedings and prospects to his friend, Charles Jennens, Esq., of Gopsall Hall, in

* *Faulkner's Journal*, Dec. 26th to 29th, 1741. The calling such a composition as "*L'Allegro ed il Penseroso*," an oratorio, was a mistake not uncommon some years ago. Even Dr. Burney, in his list of the works of Handel, classes it, and *Acis and Galatea*, and other secular works, among the oratorios.

Leicestershire, who had selected and given him the words of the *Messiah* :—

“ Dublin Decem^{br} 29, 1741.

“ Sir

“ it was with the greatest Pleasure I saw the Continuation of your Kindness by the Lines You was pleased to send me, in order to be prefix'd to your Oratorio *Messiah*, which I set to Musick before I left England. I am emboldened, Sir, by the generous Concern you please to take in relation to my affairs, to give you an account of the Success I have met here. The Nobility did me the honour to make amongst themselves a Subscription for 6 Nights, which did fill a Room of 600 Persons, so that I needed not sell one single ticket at the Door, and without Vanity the Performance was received with a general Approbation. Sig^{ra} Avolio, which I brought with me from London, pleases extraordinary. I have form'd another Tenor Voice which gives great Satisfaction, the Basses and Counter Tenors are very good, and the rest of the Chorus Singers (by my Diriction) do exceeding well, as for the Instruments they are really excellent, Mr Dubourgh being at the Head of them, and the Musick sounds delightfully in this charming Room, which puts me in such Spirits (and my Health being so good) that I exert myself on my Organ whit more then usual success.

“ I opened with the *Allegro Penseroso* and *Moderato*, and I assure you that the Words of the *Moderato* are vastly admired. The Audience being composed (besides the Flower of Ladies of Distinction and other People of the greatest Quality) of so many Bishops, Deans, Heads of the Colledge, the most eminent People in the Law as

the Chancellor, Auditor General, &c. &c. all which are very much taken with the Poetry so that I am desired to perform it again the next time. I cannot sufficiently express the kind treatment I receive here, but the Politeness of this generous Nation cannot be unknown to you, so I let you judge of the satisfaction I enjoy, passing my time with Honour, profit, and pleasure. They propose already to have some more Performances, when the 6 Nights of the Subscription are over, and My Lord Duke the Lord Lieutenant (who is allways present with all his Family on those Nights) will easily obtain a longer Permission for me by His Majesty, so that I shall be obliged to make my stay here longer than I thought. One request I must make to you, which is that you would insinuate my most devoted Respects to My Lord and my Lady Shaftesbury, you know how much their kind Protection is precious to me. Sir William Knatchbull will find here my respectfull Compliments. You will encrease my Obligations if by occasion you will present my humble service to some other Patrons and friends of mine. I expect with Impatience the Favour of your News, concerning your Health and wellfare, of which I take a real share, as for the News of your Opera's I need not trouble you for all this Town is full of their ill success by a number of Letters from your quarters to the People of Quality here, and I can't help saying but that it furnishes great Diversion and laughter. The first Opera I heard myself before I left London, and it made me very merry all along my journey, and of the second Opera, call'd Penelope, a certain nobleman writes very jocosely, *il faut que je dise avec Harlequin, nôtre Penelope n'est qu'une Sallôpe*, but I think I have trespassed too much on your Patience.

" I beg you to be persuaded of the sincere veneration and Esteem with which I have the Hounour to be

" Sr

" Your

" most obliged and most humble servant

GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL."*

From the expressions of Handel in this letter, it may be inferred that Mr. Jennens was the author of the words of *Il Moderato. Alessandro in Persia*, the opera, from the performance of which, at the opening of the Opera-house, Handel describes himself to have received so much amusement, was a *pasticcio*, in which Galuppi had interwoven the songs of several other composers, chosen, as was customary, by the new singers, in order to display their abilities. Dr. Burney speaks very highly of the selection of airs in this drama. Of Galuppi's opera, *Penelope*, the opinion expressed by Dr. Burney is about as unfavourable as that of Handel's noble correspondent.†

On the 13th of January, Handel had his second musical entertainment, at which the music of the first concert was repeated, by command of the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire.‡

The third of these "Musical Entertainments" took place, by special command of the Viceroy, on the 20th

* From the original letter of Handel, in the possession of Earl Howe.

† Burney, *Hist. of Music*, vol. iv. p. 445.

‡ *Faulkner's Journal*, January 5th to 9th, and 9th to 12th, 1741-2.

of January ; the performance being previously advertised, to consist of—

“ *Acis and Galatea*, to which will be added an Ode for St. Cecilia's Day, written by Mr. Dryden, and newly set to Musick by Mr. Handel, with several concertos on the Organ and other Instruments. N.B.—Gentlemen and Ladies are desired to order their Coaches and Chairs to come down Fishamble-street, which will prevent a great deal of inconvenience that happened the Night before ; and as there is a good convenient Room hired as an addition to a former place for the Footmen, it is hoped that Ladies will order them to attend there till called for. N.B.—There is another convenient Passage for Chairs made since the last Night.*

Previously to the second of Handel's concerts, it happened that the Governors of Mercer's Hospital applied to the Deans and Chapters of the two cathedral churches of Dublin, Christ Church and St. Patrick's, for the assistance of the two choirs, at certain performances of the Philharmonic Society. The assistance of the members of the Philharmonic Society and of the Musical Academy in Crow-street, was repeatedly sought for and obtained by the Governors of Mercer's, in performances for the benefit of the hospital, as appears by minutes on their books. They also, on several occasions, sought for and obtained the aid of the choirs of both cathedrals. The reply of the Dean and Chapter of St. Patrick's to the present application of the governors, affords us some information concerning the movements of Handel at this period. The order of the

* *Faulkner's Journal*, January 12th to 16th, and 16th to 19th, 1742.

governors is entered on the minute-book of the hospital, as follows :—

“At a meeting of Governors, Jan. 4, 1742. Present—John Rochfort, Esq., in the chair; Richd. Baldwin, Esq., John Putland, Esq., Rev. Dean Owen, Dr. Hutchinson, Archdn. Congreve, Mr. Stone, Mr. Daunt, Dr. Anderson.

“Ordered—That John Rochfort, John Putland, and Richd. Baldwin, Esqrs., be desired to apply in the name of the Governors of Mercer's Hospital, to the Revd. the Dean and Chapter of St. Patrick's, Dublin, for their leave that such of the choir as shall be willing may assist at the Philharmonick Society Performances, which are principally intended for the benefit of the sd. Hospital. And to notifie to them that the Dean and Chapter of Christ Church have been pleased to grant them the same request.”

At the next meeting of the governors, Jan, 23, 1742, at which were present—

“Major Butler in the Chair. The Rev. Dean Hutchinson,* the Revd. Doctr. Wynne, Doctr. Anderson, John Putland, Esq., the Revd. Dean Owen, Mr. Daunt, Richard Baldwin, Esq.”—

The gentlemen who had been deputed by the Board of Governors to the Chapter of St. Patrick's, reported that they had applied to them, and had received the following answer, which is entered on the minute-book :—

“The Dean and Chapter of St. Patricks are ready to concur with the Dean and Chapter of Christ Church, in permitting the Choir to assist at the Musical Performance of the Philharmonick Society,—if the Dean and Chapter of Christ Church will concur with them in permitting the Choir to assist at Mr. Handel's. They think that every argument in favour of the one, may be urged with

* Samuel Hutchinson, Dean of Dromore. In 1759, he was made Bishop of Killala.

equal strength at least in favour of the other. Particularly that which with them is of greatest weight, the advantage of Mercer's Hospital. Mr. Handel having offer'd, and being still ready, in return for such a favour, to give the Governors some of his choicest Musick, and to direct and assist at the performance of it for the benefit of the hospital, which will in one night raise a considerable sum for their use, without lessening the annual Contribution of the Philharmonic Society, or any of their other funds ; and in order to prevent this permission to be brought into a precedent, which some time or other may be of evil consequence, the Dean and Chapter of St. Patricks will concur with the Dean and Chapter of Christ Church, in any proper rule to hinder their voices or other members of the Choir from performing at any public musical performance excepting in Churches, without the joint permission of both Deans and Chapters first had and obtained."

A motion made at this meeting of the governors, to offer the above suggestion to the Dean and Chapter of Christ Church, was negatived. It appears, however, by the minutes of a subsequent meeting of the governors (Jan. 27), that the Dean of St. Patrick's granted his license to six of the Vicars-choral, and to two of the choristers, to assist at the weekly performances of the Philharmonic Society, "upon account of their being chiefly intended for the benefit of this Hospital." And the license was produced and read, and thanks were returned to the Dean.

It is evident from the answer of the Dean and Chapter of St. Patrick's, that Handel had formerly "*offered*," or undertaken, to contribute to the benefit of Mercer's Hospital, by "*giving the governors some of his choicest music*," and by "*directing and assisting at the performance of it*:" that he was "*still ready*" to fulfil his undertaking: that he was endeavouring to procure the assistance of the choirs of the two cathedrals for his

concerts or musical entertainments : and that his undertaking to “*give*,” or place his “*choicest music*” at the service of the governors of the hospital, was conditional on his obtaining the assistance of the choirs. When it is recollected that the *Messiah* was composed by Handel for the three charities, of which Mercer’s Hospital was one, it will be evident that that oratorio was the “*choicest music*” alluded to by the Dean and Chapter, as having at some former time been “offered” conditionally by him, “for the benefit of the hospital.”

No allusion is to be found in the minute-book of Mercer’s Hospital to any communication from Handel to the governors (or to any other party), save in the above expressions of the Dean and Chapter of St. Patrick’s.

The Dean of St. Patrick’s, the celebrated Dr. Jonathan Swift, was at this time sinking into that state of imbecility in which he passed his few remaining years ; and Dr. John Wynne, Precentor of the Cathedral, had been appointed to represent him as Sub-Dean. The above answer, most probably, came from Dr. Wynne, acting for and in the name of the Dean. The views conveyed in it are much the same as Swift himself might have expressed, had he been capable of thinking or acting. The same care for the discipline and good order of the choir, and the same spirit of humanity, which Swift often evinced, appear in the reply of the Sub-Dean.

Dr. Wynne was a governor and trustee of Mercer’s Hospital, and had filled the office of treasurer for the year 1740.* The frequency of his attendance at the

* Minute-book, Mercer’s Hospital.

meetings of governors and trustees, and his frequent nomination on the committee of monthly visitors, prove the active interest he took in the welfare of the institution. He was also a member of the Charitable Musical Society. Having been one of the first to wait on Handel on his arrival in Dublin,* his acquaintance with him had commenced early; and in any transactions with Handel, his power of granting or withholding the assistance of the choir of St. Patrick's gave him an influence, which he would not fail to use, as much as possible, for the benefit of the charities.

The offices of Bishop of Kildare and Dean of Christ Church, were, at this time, held by Dr. Charles Cobbe, who, in 1743, was made Archbishop of Dublin. This prelate was one of the original trustees of Mercer's hospital; and in the year 1750, when governors of the Hospital were appointed and incorporated by an Act of the Irish Parliament, he became a governor, as Archbishop of Dublin, for the time being. From the Chapter-books of Christ Church, it appears that the orders of the Dean and Chapter, forbidding all persons employed in the choir of that cathedral from assisting at any musical performance without the leave of the special Chapter, were strict. It appears also, from an entry, dated December 22nd, 1741, that the Dean and Chapter had recently found it necessary to insist upon their former orders and resolutions being obeyed. This throws some light on the difficulty which Handel seems to have experienced in procuring the assistance of the choir of this Cathedral.

Dean Swift had, in 1741, addressed an "exhorta-

* *Ante*, p. 46.

tion" to the Sub-Dean and Chapter of St. Patrick's Cathedral, commenting, in his own severe way, on the conduct of certain of the vicars-choral, for "singing and fiddling" at "a club of fiddlers in Fishamble-street," and requiring that no member of the choir should be permitted to assist at any public musical performance, without his consent, or that of the Sub-Dean and Chapter, first obtained.

In frequent instances, a member of the choir of St. Patrick's was also a member of the choir of Christ Church; and, in such cases, a license granted by the Dean of one cathedral would be practically useless, unless seconded by the license of the Dean of the other cathedral.

The name of Handel does not occur in the Chapter-books of either cathedral, nor is there any allusion in those books to any performance of his; though it will be seen that he eventually obtained the assistance of both choirs.

On Wednesday, January 27th, Handel's fourth concert took place, at which the performances of the preceding were repeated, by special command of their Excellencies.*

On Wednesday, February 3rd, the fifth concert of the series was given, by Viceregal command; at which was performed—

"An Oratorio called *ESTHER*, with Additions, and several Concertos on the Organ and other instruments. N.B. It is humbly hoped that no Gentlemen or Ladies will take it ill, that none but

* *Faulkner's Journal*, January 19th to 23rd, and 23rd to 26th, 1742.

Subscribers can be admitted, and that no Single Tickets will be delivered, or Money taken at the Door.”*

The applause with which these musical entertainments were met, induced Handel to announce a second series of subscription concerts. In *Faulkner's Journal* of February 2nd to 6th, appeared the following advertisement:—

“By the Desire of several Persons of Quality and Distinction, there will be a new Subscription made for Mr. Handel's Musical Entertainments, for Six Nights more, on the same Footing as the last. No more than 150 Subscriptions will be taken in, and no Single Tickets sold, or any money taken at the door. Subscriptions will be taken in at Mr. Handel's House in Abby street near Lyffey street, on Monday next, being the 8th Day of February, from 9 in the Morning, till 3 in the Afternoon. The performances are to continue once a week, till the 6 Nights are over. N.B. The Tickets for the last Night of the first Subscription, will be delivered to the Subscribers on Tuesday and Wednesday next at the New Musick Hall in Fishamble street, from 10 o'clock in the Morning till 3 in the Afternoon, where Subscriptions are taken in likewise.”

This advertisement is repeated in the next number of *Faulkner*,† in which appears also the following notice:—

“Whereas several of the Nobility and Gentry have been pleased to desire a second Subscription for Mr. Handel's Musical Entertainments, on the same Terms as the first; Mr. Handel being a Stranger, and not knowing where to wait on every Gentleman who was a Subscriber to his first, to pay his Compliments, hopes that those who have a mind to Subscribe again, will be pleased to send

* *Faulkner's Journal*, January 26th to 30th, and 30th to February 2nd, 1742.

† Feb. 6th to 9th, 1742.

in their names this Day (being Tuesday, the 9th of February) and To-morrow, at the Musick Hall in Fishamble-street, where Attendance will be given from 10 o'clock in the Morning, till 3 in the Afternoon, and every following Day at his House, in Abbey-street, near Liffay-street."

In the same number of *Faulkner*, the sixth and last concert of the first series is advertised to take place on the evening of Wednesday, the 10th of February, but no particulars are announced; from which omission it may be surmised that the concert consisted, like the second and fourth of the previous performances, of a repetition of the preceding.

On Wednesday, February 17, the first concert of the second series of Handel's *Musical Entertainments*, took place, at which was performed—

"*Alexander's Feast*, with Additions, and several Concertos on the Organ."

To the advertisements of this performance is appended the following notice:—

"None but Subscriber's Tickets can be admitted to the Publick Rehearsals. N.B. For the conveniency of the ready emptying the House, no Chairs will be admitted in waiting but hazard chairs, at the new passage in Copper Alley."*

The arrangements indicated in Handel's advertisements, for facility of approach to and egress from the Music-Hall, on the nights of his concerts, seem to have been generally approved, as there are several advertise-

* *Faulkner's Journal*, Feb. 9th to 13th, and 13th to 16th, 1742.

ments from other parties in *Faulkner's Journal*, and other newspapers, wherein—

“It is humbly requested that the Ladies will order their Coaches to come down Fishamble-street every Saturday to the Assembly, as they do to Mr. Handel's Entertainment, which will prevent a great many inconveniences.”*

On Monday, the 15th of February, the Lord Lieutenant prorogued the Irish Parliament; and in *Faulkner's Journal* of the day after, it was announced that “His Grace and Family will sail for England this day,” (16th) “if the wind be fair.”† On that day, we are informed, that “the Duke of Devonshire went, with the usual attendance, from the Castle to George's-quay, and there went on board the barge, in order to embark in the yacht, in his way to Park-gate.”‡ The rate of Vice-regal travelling in those days, may be gathered from the following paragraph in *Faulkner* :—

“It is thought his Grace the Duke of Devonshire got to London yesterday” (19th) “as it is supposed he landed on Wednesday evening at Park-gate, from whence he took post, there being sixteen Relais of Horses on the road for his Grace.”§

* The advertisements of this “Assembly” announce it as being held every Saturday evening, by a Mrs. Hamilton and Mrs. Walker, at “The Charitable Musick Hall in Fishamble-street, which is finished in the genteelest manner.”

† *Faulkner's Journal*, Feb. 13th to 16th, 1742.

‡ *Dublin News-Letter*, Feb. 16 to 20, 1742.

§ *Faulkner's Journal*, Feb. 16th to 20th, 1742. The Duke arrived in London on the 20th, having occupied five days in the journey between Dublin and London.—*Gentleman's Magazine*, Feb. 1742.

The Primate Dr. Hugh Boulter, the Lord Chancellor Jocelyn, and the Right Hon. Henry Boyle, Speaker of the Irish House of Commons, were, on the departure of the Lord Lieutenant, sworn as Lords Justices of Ireland.

In *Faulkner's Journal* for February 16th to 20th, "*Alexander's Feast*, with additions," is advertised to be repeated, "with several concertos on the Organ," at Handel's next concert, on Wednesday, the 24th. In the ensuing number of *Faulkner*,* notice is given of the postponement of the performance till March 2nd, in consequence of "One of Mr. Handel's principal Singers having fallen sick." On that day, the second concert of the second series took place—the music being *Alexander's Feast*, according to *Faulkner* of February 23rd to 27th; in which number is inserted the following advertisement:—

"N. B. The Charitable Society on College Green, at the request of Mr. Handel, have put off their weekly Concert until Tuesday the 9th of March."

In the same number of *Faulkner's Journal*, Monsieur de Rheiner, "a distressed foreign gentleman," who was to have had a benefit at the Theatre, in Smock-alley, when he was to have "attempted the part of Sir Harry Wildair," expresses regret for being—

"—obliged to put off his Day, which was to have been on Tuesday next, on account of all the best Musick being engaged to Mr. Handel's concert."†

* Feb. 20th to 23rd.

† Also, in *Faulkner's Journal*, Feb. 27th to March 2nd.

From this advertisement, we may infer that Handel had collected in his band as numerous and efficient an orchestra as the state of musical art in Dublin at that time enabled him to assemble.

He had now been in Dublin for more than three months, and had won enthusiastic applause, by performances of his admirable music, in eight successive concerts. There remained four of the second series to be performed. The performances which had already taken place had introduced to his delighted listeners, a music of astonishing grandeur and majesty, and abounding in passages more beautiful than they had ever heard associated with English words, unless we except some of those exquisite old melodies, which have been pronounced by competent critics, to be the finest ancient national music in the world.

Handel, as is well known, gave his high testimony to the extraordinary merit of the Irish melodies. They bear the same relation to his compositions, that the fragments of Ossian bear to the poetry of Milton. They express the primitive feelings of nature, in forms of uncommon elegance. They tell their simple tale of joy or grief—of merriment or dejection, or of a blending of both sentiments, in accents that find a response in every human bosom. They possess the two qualities so remarkable in Handel's music—of coming home at once to the feelings, and also of giving new pleasure every time we hear them. Some works of art attract us on their first presentation; but they have no depth, and on further trial, their charm ceases. Other works do not make their impression at once; they need repetition and study before their merits reveal themselves; but when studied, their influence is immortal, and we are

ever finding something new and admirable in them. And others, again, having arrested our delight at the first, keep it, and gain on us to the end.

“ A thing of beauty is a joy for ever ;
Its loveliness increases ; it will never
Pass into nothingness.” *

The same principle is applicable to poetry and all the fine arts.

Handel is said to have declared that he would willingly resign the fame he had acquired by his most celebrated compositions, for the glory of being the inventor of the air *Aileen Aroon*.† The mode of expression may seem undue : the admirers of Handel will hardly concur with him ; but it marks the fervour of his admiration for this ancient music.

A pleasing composition of Handel's, which was written by him, during his residence in Ireland, for a member of a family with whom he was intimate, has been preserved in manuscript. It is called *Forest Music*. The first movement, in common time, is in his own unmistakeable style ; a cheerful *veille*, as if for hunters going out in a morning. In the second movement, which is in $\frac{3}{8}$ time, there is a remarkable blending of the character of Irish music with the peculiar style of Handel. It would seem, as if, by interweaving the national music of Ireland with his own, he meant to pay

* Keats' *Endymion*.

† All great musicians love a simple melody. Haydn has recorded that the highest pleasure he ever received from music, was on hearing Jones's octave chant sung at St. Paul's Cathedral by four thousand charity-children, with the choir and organ.—*Haydn's Diary while in England*. Harmonicon, vol. v.

a graceful compliment to the country where he was receiving a very cordial welcome.

Carolán, the last of the native Irish bards, died in 1738. The Irish melodies were then falling into disuse, if not into contempt.* The attention of the people of Dublin was directed to other styles of music, particularly to the Italian. And now the visit of Handel effected a further revolution in the music of the Irish metropolis, and produced a sensation which roused public feeling from the lethargy and indolence of the prevailing fashion.† His reception was such as was due no less to his virtues as a man than to his extraordinary genius and abilities as a musician.‡ At each successive concert, the bursts of applause from his auditors, and the grateful tributes of esteem and admiration which met him in private circles, must have relieved his anxieties, and inspired him with confidence. The spirit of the great master was soothed and gladdened by the enthusiasm of his reception. His present position must have recalled to him the earlier scenes of his career, when, before his encounters with the world, his peace and his reputation were independent on the caprices of fashion; and when, as ideas came to him, he needed only time to mature them, and opportunity to produce them, to be certain of success. The world of unrest was left behind him. No rival, or hostile party were

* Walker, Historical Memoirs of the Irish Bards.

† Walker. Whitelaw.

‡ "In Dublin he was kindly received, and due regard was paid to his extraordinary merit. Assisted by his associate, Matthew Dubourg, whose powers on the violin are still the theme of many a tongue, he diverted the thoughts of the people from every other pursuit."—Walker, Historical Memoirs of the Irish Bards.

now at hand, to counteract the natural impulses of human hearts, and hinder his magnificent utterances of their due effect.

The musical entertainments, of which Handel had now given eight, were preliminary to an event which will be ever memorable in the annals of music; the production of his master-work, the *Messiah*. The earliest intimation which I find of the approach of this event, is the following entry in the minute-book of Mercer's Hospital:—

“At a meeting of Governors, March 4, 1742. Present:—John Putland, Esq.; Mr. Baldwin, Dean Owen, Dean Hutchinson, Dean Maturine.*

“Whereas Mr. Putland reported from a Committee appointed to consider of a Performance designed for the benefit of this Hospital, the Infirmary, and the Prisoners of the Marshalseas, That it was the desire of the Gentlemen of that Committee, that a Deputation from the Trustees for those several Charities should Attend the Deans and Chapters of Christ Church and St. Patrick, to desire their leave that the Choir of both Cathedrals may assist at the said Performance.

“Ordered—That the Trustees of this Hospital do concur with the Committee provided that the whole Benefit of the said Performance, and of all Rehearsals previous to it, shall be entirely applied to the Support of the said Charities, and that Tickets be given out for whatever Rehearsals shall be necessary, at such prices as shall be thought most convenient by the Trustees of said Charities.”

No further notice on this subject occurs in the mi-

* Gabriel James Maturin, Dean of Kildare, and a Prebendary of Christ Church. In 1745, on the death of Swift, he was made Dean of St. Patrick's. He was a member of the Charitable Musical Society; and a distribution of daily bread to the prisoners in the Four Courts' Marshalsea, was made under his superintendence.—*Faulkner's Journal*, July 7th to 11th, 1741.

nute-book of Mercer's Hospital. Although neither the name of Handel nor of the oratorio are mentioned in the report from the "Committee," or in the reply of the Governors, yet, that it was the approaching performance of the *Messiah* which is here referred to, is evident from the advertisements inserted, not quite three weeks afterwards, in the Dublin newspapers, in which the three objects of charity included in the present benevolent design, as signified in the message from the "Committee," to the Governors of Mercer's, are mentioned as the three charities for which the performance of the *Messiah* was about to be given, and for which performance the assistance of the two choirs had been obtained.

The "Committee appointed to consider of this performance," and to whom much of the preliminary arrangements were evidently entrusted, probably consisted of friends of the three charities, acting as representatives of them severally.

Handel, engaged as he now was, in making preparations for the production of his great work, did not neglect the remainder of his second series of subscription concerts. The following advertisement appeared in *Faulkner's Journal* of Tuesday, March 2nd, to Saturday, the 6th :—

"The new Serenata called HYMEN, that was to have been performed on Wednesday next, (10th) at Mr. Handel's Musical Entertainments at the New Musick Hall in Fishamble-street, is, by the sudden illness of Mrs. Cibber, put off to the Wednesday following; and as many of Mr. Handel's subscribers are obliged to go out of Town soon, it is humbly hoped that they will accept of the *Allegro ed il Penseroso*, for the next Night's Performance, which will be on Wednesday the 10th of March. Tickets will be deli-

vered to the subscribers on Tuesday and Wednesday next, at the Musick Hall in Fishamble street, from 10 o'clock in the Morning till 3 in the Afternoon."

In the next number of *Faulkner*,* the public were informed, that—

"Several Gentlemen and Ladies, subscribers to Mr. Handel's Musical Entertainments, having desired that the Musical Performance should be put off till Wednesday se'night, the 17th of March, Mrs. Cibber being in a fair way of recovery, The new Serenata HYMEN will be certainly performed on that day."

Dr. Burney, who mentions the serenata, or operetta of *Hymen*, in his History of Music, speaks on the whole, favourably of it, on his inspection of an imperfect manuscript score of the work. He describes it as only a hasty sketch, in two acts. The words are Italian. It was performed only twice in London; on November 22, and December 13, in the year 1740; and (excepting in Dublin) never afterwards. The giving it, in Handel's advertisements in Dublin, the epithet of a "*new serenata*," suggests the probability, that the composer had made some alterations in it.† With the exception of this serenata, Handel gave no performance of music to Italian words in Dublin; but relied on his compositions to English words for establishing himself in the favour of the people of Dublin, previously to bringing out his oratorio the *Messiah*.

* March 6th to 9th, 1742.

† Previously to Handel's leaving Ireland, at a concert for the benefit of Mrs. Arne, on the 21st of July, 1742, "at the Great Room in Fishamble-street," Mrs. Cibber sung "*Chi scherza colle Rose*, from Mr. Handel's opera of *Hymen*."—*Dublin News-Letter* of July 13 to 17, 1742.

The intended performance of the serenata is thus further advertised in *Faulkner*, March 9th to 13th :—

“At the new Musick Hall in Fishamble street, on Wednesday next, being the 17th of March, will be performed a new Serenata called HYMEN. With Concertos on the Organ and other instruments.”

The succeeding number of *Faulkner* (March 13th to 16th) announces that—

“At the new Musick Hall in Fishamble street, To-morrow, being the 17th of March, will be performed, *L'Allegro ed il Penseroso*, with Concertos on the organ ; Mrs. Cibber continuing so ill, that the new Serenata called HYMEN cannot be performed on that day.”

This was the third concert of the second series.

The fourth concert consisted of the long-delayed performance of *Hymen*, “with concertos on the organ, and other instruments.” It took place on Wednesday, the 24th of March.*

In the number of *Faulkner's Journal* for March 23rd to 27th, 1742, is the following important notice, which is not the less interesting, that its appearance in the columns of the Dublin journals, on the morning of Saturday, the 27th of March, was the first occasion on which the words “*Handel's Oratorio, the MESSIAH*,” ever appeared in print, or met the public eye :—

“For Relief of the Prisoners in the several Gaols, and for the Support of Mercer's Hospital in Stephen's street, and of the Charitable Infirmary on the Inn's Quay, on Monday the 12th of April, will be performed at the Musick Hall in Fishamble street, *Mr.*

* *Faulkner's Journal*, March 16th to 20th, and 20th to 23rd, 1742.

Handel's new Grand Oratorio, called the MESSIAH, in which the Gentlemen of the Choirs of both Cathedrals will assist, with some Concertos on the Organ, by Mr. Handell. Tickets to be had at the Musick Hall, and at Mr. Neal's in Christ Church-yard, at half a Guinea each. N.B. No Person will be admitted to the Rehearsal without a Rehearsal Ticket, which will be given gratis with the Ticket for the Performance when payed for.*

In the same number of *Faulkner*, the fifth subscription concert of the second series is advertised for Wednesday, the 31st of March; to consist of a repetition of the "new Serenata HYMEN, with Concertos," &c.

Both of these advertisements are repeated in the ensuing number of *Faulkner*.† In this second advertisement of the *Messiah* in *Faulkner*, it is called, "Mr. Handel's New Grand Sacred Oratorio, called the *Messiah*."‡

In *Faulkner's Journal* of March 30th to April 3rd, the sixth concert of the second series is thus advertised:—

"At the new Musick Hall in Fishamble street, on Wednesday next, being the 7th of April, will be performed an Oratorio called *ESTHER*, with Concertos on the Organ, being the last time of Mr. Handel's Subscription Performance."

* This advertisement appears in the *Dublin News-Letter* of the same date; with the addition, that at the places mentioned for the sale of tickets, "*Books are also to be had at a British sixpence each.*" In this number of the *Dublin News-Letter*, the expression is, "*New Grand Sacred Oratorio.*"

† March 27th to 30th, 1742.

‡ Also, in *Dublin News-Letter*, *id.*

Immediately after which, is the following announcement :—

“ On Thursday next, being the 8th Inst., at the Musick Hall in Fishamble-street, will be the Rehearsal of Mr. Handel's new Grand Sacred Oratorio, called *The MESSIAH*, in which the Gentlemen of both Choirs will assist: with some Concertos on the Organ by Mr. Handel. The Doors will be opened at Eleven, and no Person to be admitted without a Rehearsal Ticket, which is given gratis with the Tickets for the Performance, when paid for. Tickets to be had at the Musick Hall, and at Mr. Neal's in Christ-Church-yard, at Half a Guinea each.”

This announcement is followed by a repetition of the notice—“ For Relief of the Prisoners,” &c.

These three advertisements are severally repeated in the number of *Faulkner* for April 3rd to 6th.

It may be observed, that in the advertisements of the subscription concerts, though concertos on the organ are always announced, yet Handel is not mentioned as a performer. But in the advertisements of the *first* performance of the *Messiah* (and in no other advertisement), it is specially stated that there will be “ *Concertos on the Organ by Mr. Handel.*” In the previous concerts, he may be presumed to have left the organ, in general, if not entirely, to Mr. MacLaine, the excellent organist whom he had brought with him from England: but he seems to have thought it right to distinguish the first production of his new oratorio, by advertising his own performance on the organ for the occasion.

Whether the oratorio of the *Messiah* had been publicly performed in London, previously to Handel's setting out for Ireland, and whether at that performance

it had been coldly received, are questions concerning which there has been a controversy, on the merits of which it is hoped some light will be thrown by the present narrative, and by the following statement of the evidence at both sides.

For the position that the *Messiah* was performed in London, and coldly received there, previously to Handel's visit to Dublin, the original authority (so far as all subsequent writers seem to have been acquainted) is the Memoirs of the Life of Handel, published anonymously in London, in 1760, the year after Handel's death.* In these memoirs, it is asserted that the *Messiah* was performed, and "met with a cold reception" in London, in the year 1741, previously to Handel's visit to Ireland; and that this was among the circumstances which induced Handel to leave England for a while. These assertions have been adopted and repeated by a host of writers down to the present day. Two writers on Musical History, Mr. Hogarth and Mr. Stafford, endeavour to adduce a piece of evidence in support of this theory. They affirm that a memorandum in Handel's own handwriting, in the original score, proves that this oratorio, finished on Saturday, the 12th of September, was performed on Monday, the 14th. It is surprising that such a supposition should have been thus easily adopted. But the error of these writers has been shewn to arise from their mistaking a German

* The author of this book was Mr. Mainwaring. Dr. Burney cites the work as the original authority for the assertion.—Hist. of Music, vol. iv. p. 661. In 1761, Mattheson, the German musician, and early friend of Handel, published a translation of this Life of Handel, from the English; with additions and remarks, which, Dr. Burney says, are neither very candid nor liberal.

word in a supplementary memorandum at the end of the work, which signifies, not that the oratorio was performed, but that the writing or composition of the music was finished, completed, or filled up, on the 14th of September.* Other writers adduce no evidence. They merely echo the assertion of Mr. Mainwaring. Sir John Hawkins says, "The *Messiah* was first performed at Covent Garden in the year 1741, by the name of a Sacred Oratorio. As it consisted chiefly of chorus, and the airs contained in it were greatly inferior to most in his operas and former oratorios, it was but coldly received by the audience; the consciousness whereof, and a suspicion that the public were growing indifferent towards these entertainments, determined him to try the temper of the people of Ireland."† Dr. Busby repeats the same story; but finds the rationale of the unfavourable reception, "*in the words*." "Recollecting," he says, "that the words are sacred, we are obliged to seek it in the want of a consistent and dramatic series of incidents."‡ Such is the state of evidence (amounting, in fact, to a mere assertion) for the position that the *Messiah* was first performed in

* In the original score of the *Messiah*, the supplementary memorandum in German, (after "Fine dell' Oratorio," &c.) is, "*ausgefüllt den 14 dieses*."

In the original score of the opera of *Berenice*, after the memorandum "*Fine dell' Opera, Berenice, January 18th, 1737*," Handel wrote the word "*auszufüllen*," signifying "*to be filled up*;" and after this, is another supplementary memorandum in German, signifying that the score was "*finished* on the 27th." The first performance of this opera was on the 18th of May following.—Burney, *Hist. of Music*, vol. iv. pp. 408, 411.

† *Hist. of Music*, vol. v. p. 358.

‡ *Hist. of Music*, vol. ii. p. 14.

London, and coldly received, previously to Handel's visit to Dublin.

On the other hand, the evidence demonstrating the opposite position, that the first performance of the *Messiah* was in Dublin during the visit of Handel, is clear and satisfactory. For the better understanding of this evidence, let it be borne in mind, that the composition of the *Messiah* was concluded on the 12th (or 14th) of September, 1741. Handel arrived in Dublin on the 18th of November following. Allowing about a fortnight, including his delay at Chester, for his journey from London to Dublin, he must have quitted London on (we will say) the 4th of November. Seven weeks, then, and a few days over, was all that elapsed between the concluding of the oratorio and his quitting London; and it must have been in this interval, that the alleged performance and cold reception of the *Messiah* in London, previously to Handel's coming to Ireland, took place, if it did take place at all.* Bearing this fact, then, in mind, the following is the evidence that the first performance of the *Messiah* took place in Dublin.

I. In the London newspapers of the time, in which all the performances of Handel's works are chronologically recorded, no mention is made of any performance of the *Messiah* in London, or anywhere else, previously

* As respects the argument concerning the first performance of the *Messiah*, the interval of seven weeks here limited, might perhaps be further abridged, when it is recollected that the composition of the first part of *Samson* was finished on the 29th of September. It is unlikely that in the interval between the 14th and 29th, during which Handel was engaged on this composition, he should have found time for rehearsals and a performance of the *Messiah*.

to Handel's visit to Dublin. The fact of its performance would have been mentioned, had it taken place. But no such notice or advertisement is to be found in the London newspapers: nor until the year 1743 (the year after Handel's return from Ireland), when the oratorio of *Samson* was performed, and afterwards the *Messiah*, do we find any intimation of a performance of the *Messiah* in London. Dr. Burney, and all authorities, describe its reception *then*, as being marked with universal admiration and applause.

II. Dr. Burney, who went to London in 1744, and was well acquainted with Handel, and performed in his band, and took every opportunity, as he tells us, of becoming acquainted with the manners and character of so extraordinary a man, would, it is to be presumed, have heard among the musicians of Handel's band, and among other musicians, and from other people, of the alleged performance and cold reception of this celebrated oratorio, if such had taken place; more especially as this oratorio was the theme of the admiration of the musical profession, and of the public in general. But it does not seem that he ever heard of such an event, till the publication of the *Memoirs of Handel*, in 1760. Twenty-eight years afterwards, writing to his friend Dr. Quin, of Dublin, on the subject of the alleged performance, concerning which he was then making diligent inquiry, Dr. Burney says it was a fact "of which the round assertion of Handel's biographer, Mr. Mainwaring, never convinced *him*."*

III. Dr. Burney, when compiling materials for the fourth volume of his *History of Music*, which he pub-

* *Infra*, p. 98.

lished in 1789, took, as he informs us, "considerable pains to obtain a minute and accurate account of the musical transactions of the great musician, during his residence in Ireland." Dr. Burney was in habits of extensive acquaintance with literary and musical society in the metropolis, and throughout England; a circumstance which, added to the zeal and interest with which he prosecuted his inquiries, rendered him peculiarly competent to elicit any latent fragment of evidence on the point. And yet, after diligent inquiry, he could find no particle of evidence that the *Messiah* had been performed and coldly received in England, previously to Handel's departure for Ireland. Of such reported performance he says, it is "a fact which I am glad to find impossible to ascertain, either by the newspapers of the times in which all his other public performances, sacred and secular, are chronologically recorded, or by the testimony of persons still living, who remember the performance of the *Messiah* in Dublin, and of his oratorios previous to that period in England."* Among the testimonies adduced by Dr. Burney, is that of Dr. Quin, who had known Handel in Dublin, and who, in a letter to Burney, dated July, 1788, says, "The *Messiah*, I am convinced, was performed in Dublin for the first time, and with the greatest applause." Dr. Burney, also, cites the authority of Mrs. Arne, wife of Dr. Arne, the composer, who went to Ireland with her husband in 1742, where they remained till 1744, and who, he says, "has not the least doubt of the *Messiah* having been performed there for the first time."†

* History of Music, vol. iv. p. 661.

† Hist. of Music, vol. iv. p. 662. When Dr. Burney wrote the Sketch of the Life of Handel, prefixed to the account of the Com-

To these testimonies I will add the tradition or opinion preserved among the members of the choirs of the Cathedrals of Christ Church and St. Patrick, and of the Chapel of Trinity College, Dublin, that the *Messiah* was first performed in Dublin.

IV. The anecdote related by Dr. Burney, of Handel at Chester, on his way to Ireland, *proving* some manuscript choruses of the *Messiah*, which he intended to perform in Ireland, and which had been hastily transcribed, negatives the supposition that they had been previously performed, and is quite in keeping with the rest of the evidence.*

V. In a notice subjoined to the account given in *Faulkner*, of the rehearsal of the *Messiah* at the Music-Hall in Dubin, it is stated that this oratorio was *composed for* the charity for whose benefit the performance was given. Handel, who was a man of high honour and integrity, never could have sanctioned such an impression

memoration in Westminster Abbey, he was evidently in some uncertainty on this point, and was anxious to relieve England from the disgrace of rejecting (even once only) so noble a work as the *Messiah*, by ascribing any such rejection "to the resentment of the many great personages whom Handel had offended by refusing to compose for Senesino." In the fourth volume of the *History of Music*, published four years later, Dr. Burney gives the result of the inquiries he had been making in the interval.

* The account given of this transaction by Mr. W. Gardiner, in his amusing volumes, "*Music and Friends*" (published in 1838), is, that "the composer wished to enlist some choristers." But Mr. Gardiner, who was not born until thirty years after the occurrence, gives no reason for departing from Dr. Burney's narrative, nor for adopting and repeating the story of the previous performance and failure of the *Messiah*, without even an allusion to Dr. Burney's reasoning and deliberate opinion on the subject.

on the minds of the committee, who inserted that notice, had there been a previous performance of this oratorio for any other purpose than this very charity.

VI. In the letter already given, dated Dublin, December 29, 1741, from Handel to Mr. Jennens, the following passage occurs:—"It was with the greatest pleasure I saw the continuation of your kindness, by the lines you was pleased to send me, in order to be prefixed to your Oratorio Messiah, *which I set to Musick before I left England.*"

It cannot be supposed that Handel would express himself thus, if there had been a performance of the oratorio before he left England. Had such been the case, Mr. Jennens, a man of eminent literary and artistic acquirements, who frequently visited London, and was inquisitive about every event in the world of literature and art, must have heard of the performance of the oratorio, of which the words were selected by himself; and so must thousands of persons besides. And to suppose Handel, under such circumstances, when he had been several weeks in Dublin, writing to his friend, acknowledging having received from him certain words to be prefixed in the title-page of the oratorio, and, silent as to the performance, communicating to him as a piece of news, the fact that he had *set the words of the oratorio to music* (!) is to suppose an absurdity which needs not the parade of a formal refutation.

From all these premises, we arrive with perfect certainty at the conclusion, that no performance of the *Messiah* took place in London till after Handel's return from Ireland; and that Dublin may rightfully claim the honour of being first to witness and applaud this sublime and immortal work.

In the advertisements issued by Handel, of his concerts in Dublin, previous to the performance of the *Messiah*, the epithet "new" is not applied to any of his works, excepting to the serenata of *Hymen*. In the advertisements of the *Messiah*, that work is described as "Mr. Handel's new grand oratorio, called the *Messiah*." To the question whether either of these "new" works had been previously performed in London, the answer, in the case of the little serenata or operetta (supposing it the same as had been performed in London) is ready, namely, that the two several dates of its performance are recorded. In the case of the great oratorio, the answer is equally ready, that there is no record of any previous performance of it, and much positive evidence disproving the assertion.

Had there been a performance of the *Messiah* previously to Handel's departure from London, it would probably have met with the same cold reception from the public (and for the same reasons), as was accorded to *Saul* and *Israel in Egypt*.

The several theories set up by Hawkins and Busby in order to account for the supposed ill reception of the *Messiah*, are remarkable instances of an endeavour to find the explanation of an assumed fact.

The expression of Hawkins, that the *Messiah* "consisted chiefly of chorus," applies rather to *Israel in Egypt* than to the *Messiah*. His censure of the airs of the *Messiah*, as "greatly inferior to most in Handel's operas and former oratorios," has not been consented to. The musical world in general have agreed in considering the airs in the *Messiah* as beyond praise. They give (equally with the choruses) a touching expression of the sentiment of the inspired words to which they are

set, and of which they are a beautiful and admirable exposition.

The theory of Dr. Busby is, that the words being "sacred," there is a "want of a consistent and dramatic series of incidents." It will, indeed, easily be granted, that the incidents presented to the mind in the oratorio of the *Messiah* are not *dramatic*; but as to the charge of their want of consistency, two examples shall suffice to refute it.

The prophecy of Isaiah, "He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," and its fulfilment, seven centuries afterwards, in the person of Him who "was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not," but He was "laughed to scorn," "wounded for our transgressions," and "bruised for our iniquities," are two consecutive and consistent incidents of the most amazing and affecting character.

The words, "Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead," state two incidents, intimately related with each other; the enunciation of which finds a response in the inner nature of man, and is capable of awakening in him a deeper and more healthful interest than can possibly be excited by the incidents of the novelist, the satirist, or the dramatist.*

* Handel, who would not have charged the incidents in the oratorio of the *Messiah* with want of consistency, was so far of the same opinion with Dr. Busby, as to think that the English audiences of his day generally took no interest in a performance merely of music joined to poetry; and that something that had the appearance of a plot or fable, such as might be acted on a stage, was necessary to keep their attention awake for a whole evening. "Per-

The force of these inspired words is not lessened (to say the least) when uttered with the sublime eloquence of Handel's music.

The honour of making the selection of passages from Scripture, to which Handel has composed the music of the *Messiah*, is due to Charles Jennens, Esq., of Gopsall Hall, in Leicestershire, who died in 1773; a gentleman of ancient family, of much singularity of character, and of eminent worth, piety, and accomplishment. He was a man of large fortune, and in his youth is said to have been remarkable for an excess of splendour and profusion. In maturer years, his wealth was expended in the cultivation of his eminently refined and intellectual tastes, and in the exercise of a boundless charity and beneficence. He was a Non-juror; and his liberal bounty was the means of supporting and protecting many persons of the same principles. His habits were those of a literary man, and a lover of the fine arts. He lived in the enjoyment of a noble library, and a large collection of pictures; and both at Gopsall, and at his house in Great Ormond-street, in London, he constantly maintained a hospitable magnificence. He was the patron and friend of Handel, who set a high value on his judgment as a connoisseur in music, and generally consulted him. Handel often visited him at Gopsall; and up to the time of his death, continued in the strictest intimacy and friendship with him.* The words of *Belshazzar*, and others of Handel's oratorios

haps," observes Hawkins, "he might be mistaken in this opinion." —*Hist. of Music*, vol. v. p. 356.

* Nichols's *Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century*, vol. iii. pp. 120, &c.

were written by this accomplished gentleman. That the words of the *Messiah* were compiled by him, appears from the expressions of Handel, who, in his letters to Mr. Jennens, speaking of this oratorio, calls it "*your oratorio, Messiah,*" and "*your Messiah ;*" and also, from the acknowledgment of Mr. Jennens himself, who, in a letter to a friend, dated Aug. 30, 1745, says, "I shall shew you a collection I gave Handel, call'd *Messiah*, which I value highly, and he has made a fine entertainment of it."*

When we consider the peculiar character of Mr. Jennens, and the intimacy that existed between him and Handel, it seems not improbable that the rumours mentioned on the authority of the Dean of Middleham, by Mr. Nichols, in the *Literary Anecdotes*, attributing "the idea of the oratorios" to him, had some foundation in fact; and that the counsel and conversation of Mr. Jennens may have been instrumental in inducing the composer to abandon the opera, and to dedicate his talents to greater objects.

Handel (as we have seen), in his letter from Dublin, dated December 29, 1741, acknowledges, with much pleasure, having received from Mr. Jennens, some "*lines,*" intended "to be prefix'd to *his Oratorio Messiah.*" As I have been unable to procure the programme or book of words, issued on occasion of the first performance of the oratorio, and know not whether such memorial be extant, I presume that the words or "*lines*" sent by Mr. Jennens, were the same as appear on the title page of the earliest book printed in Dublin, of the words of the *Messiah*, which I have been able to

* *Infra*, p. 118.

procure. Its date is 1757.* On the title-page of this old programme, after the words, "Messiah, an Oratorio, composed by Mr. Handel," the following words appear by way of motto:—

"MAJORA CANAMUS."†

"And without controversy, great is the Mystery of Godliness. God was manifested in the Flesh, justified by the Spirit, seen of Angels, preached among the Gentiles, believed on in the World, and received up into Glory.‡

"In whom are hid all the Treasures of wisdom and knowledge."§

The same words appear on the title-page of a book (printed in Dublin in 1780) of the words of the *Messiah*, "as it will be performed for the benefit of Mercer's Hospital." This book is preserved, with other old programmes, and with the old music already mentioned, at Mercer's.

Of the band which Handel had assembled for the first performance of this great work, we have no very particular account. We may be certain that it was the best and most numerous that could be procured in Dublin. Dubourg was leader,||as, doubtless, he had been at all Handel's previous concerts; and the state band, of which he was master, formed, of course, part of the orchestra. Dr. Maclaine probably presided at the

* "Printed by James Hoey, at the sign of Mercury in Skinner Row. MDCCLVII." By the kind permission of George Ponder, Esq., I was enabled to see the volume of old programmes in his possession, containing the above. In this programme of the *Messiah*, the words of the chorus, "O thou that tellest," are different from the words as they now stand: and several of the songs and choruses now in the oratorio, do not appear.

† Virgil, *Pollio*.

‡ 1 Timothy, iii. 16.

§ Colossians, ii. 3.

|| Burney.

organ, giving place to Handel to perform his concertos between the parts of the oratorio. Handel conducted the performance. He was always a rigid disciplinarian in the orchestra; and his superintendence of the band, during his twelve subscription concerts, must have practised them in his music, and prepared them for his careful instructions on the present occasion. That they profited by the superintendence of such a master, may be easily imagined. In a subsequent number of *Faulkner*, they are spoken of as a "most celebrated band."* To their state of discipline, the exertions of Dubourg must also have contributed. Dr. Quin, in his letter to Dr. Burney, gives some account of the performers. "The Messiah," he says, "I am convinced, was performed in Dublin for the first time, and with the greatest applause. Mrs. Cibber and Signora Avolio were the principal performers. These, with the assistance of the Choiristers of St. Patrick's Cathedral and Christ Church, formed the vocal band; and Dubourg, with several good instrumental performers, composed a very respectable orchestra."†

The following are the names of some of the vicars-choral of Christ Church and St. Patrick's, in the year 1742. Most of them were members of the choirs of both cathedrals:—

Rev. William Taverner, John Phipps, John Church, John Mason, Rev. John Eusebius Smyth, Rev. John Worrall, Rev. William Jones, William Lambe, Robert Hall, Ralph Rosingrave, Robert Woffington, Joseph Ward, John Griffith, John Hill.

* *Faulkner's Journal*, Jan. 31st to Feb. 4th, 1743-4.

† Burney, *Hist of Music*, vol. iv. p. 661.

The children of the choir of St. Patrick's were—William Cooley, William Williams, George Magee, Samuel Murphy, George Betts, John Marsh.*

The air, "He was despised and rejected of men," was sung by Mrs. Cibber, for whom it was composed; "and whose voice," says Dr. Burney, "though a mere thread, and knowledge of music inconsiderable, yet, by a natural pathos, and perfect conception of the words, she often penetrated the heart, when others, with infinitely greater voice and skill, could only reach the ear."†

A ticket for the rehearsal was given gratis to every person who purchased a ticket for the performance: and the tickets were advertised to be had, not as in the previous advertisements for Handel's concerts, at "Mr. Handel's house in Abbey-street," but at "the Music-Hall, and at Mr. Neale's, in Christ Church-yard." From hence, it appears, that the sale of the tickets, as well as the application of the money received, were left entirely in the hands of the committee. All that Handel had to do, when the preliminary arrangements were completed, was, to direct the performance. He had formerly offered, on condition of the choirs of the two

* These are the names of the choristers (or boys of the choir) of St. Patrick's, in the year 1743; and, probably, therefore, in the year preceding.

† Some idea of Mrs. Cibber's style of singing, and of her peculiar bent of feeling, may, perhaps, be gathered from a remark, recorded by Miss Hawkins, of Lady Lucy Meyrick, who had heard her. That lady, speaking of Mrs. Cibber's singing "God save the King," in chorus on the stage, in which she considered her as unrivalled, said, "it was a perfect *hymn* as she sang it."—*Memoirs*, &c. by Miss Hawkins, vol. i. p. 139.

cathedrals being permitted to assist him, "to give some of his choicest music, and to direct and assist at the performance of it." Having obtained an object so important to him as the assistance of the choirs, he now fulfilled his part of the agreement. The benefit of this arrangement was mutual, both to Handel and to the charities. They received large pecuniary aid; and Handel, who well knew the value of the assistance of the choir, was enabled to bring out his master-work in a style which, without such assistance, would have been impracticable. It need scarcely be added, that in thus dedicating this sublime monument of his genius to the relief of suffering humanity, Handel was acting in accordance with that generous and lofty nature, of which, in the course of his life, he gave repeated instances. The members of the choirs, and the other principal performers, also gave their services gratuitously.

The day of rehearsal came. It was Thursday, the 8th of April, 1742. The Hall was filled. The music of the *Messiah* was, on that day and in that place, heard for the first time by a public audience.

Its reception is thus described in *Faulkner's Journal* of April 6th to 10th:—

"Yesterday, Mr. Handel's new Grand Sacred Oratorio, called The *MESSIAH*, was rehearsed at the Musick Hall in Fishamble-street, to a most Grand, Polite, and Crowded Audience; and was performed so well, that it gave universal Satisfaction to all present; and was allowed by the greatest Judges, to be the finest Composition of Musick that ever was heard, and the sacred Words as properly adapted for the occasion.

"N.B. At the desire of several persons of Distinction, the above Performance is put off to Tuesday next. The doors will be opened at Eleven, and the Performance begin at Twelve.

"Many Ladies and Gentlemen who are well-wishers to this Noble

and Grand Charity, for which this Oratorio was composed, request it as a Favour, that the Ladies who honour this Performance with their Presence, would be pleased to come without Hoops, as it will greatly encrease the Charity, by making Room for more company.*

"The Committee of the Musical Society are desired to meet on Wednesday the 14th Inst. at their Rooms in Fishamble Street, at Six o'clock in the Evening, to consider of matters relating to the good of the Society."

A similar account of the rehearsal is given (evidently by another hand) in the *Dublin News-Letter* of April 6th to 10th:—

"Yesterday Morning, at the Musick Hall in Fishamble-street, there was a public Rehearsal of the Messiah, Mr. Handel's new sacred Oratorio, which in the opinion of the best Judges, far surpasses anything of that Nature, which has been performed in this or any other Kingdom. This elegant Entertainment was conducted in the most regular Manner, and to the entire satisfaction of the most crowded and polite Assembly.

"For the benefit of three very important public Charities, there will be a grand Performance of this Oratorio on Tuesday next in the forenoon, the doors will be opened at Eleven, and the Performance begins at Twelve a clock.

"N.B. At the desire of several persons of Distinction, Monday being Cathedral Day, the Performance is put off till Tuesday."

On Tuesday, the 13th of April, 1742, the first performance of the oratorio of the *Messiah* took place. On the morning of that day, the following notice appeared in *Faulkner's Journal*:—

"This day will be performed Mr. Handell's new Grand Sacred

* The ladies, to their honour be it recorded, complied with this request, as appears by an advertisement in *Faulkner*, of Jan. 28th to 31st, 1743-4.

Oratorio, called the *MESSIAH*. The doors will be opened at Eleven, and the performance begin at Twelve.

"The Stewards of the Charitable Musical Society request the Favour of the ladies not to come with hoops this day to the Musick Hall in Fishamble Street. The Gentlemen are desired to come without their swords."*

The following account of this memorable performance is given in the number of *Faulkner's Journal* published on the ensuing Saturday :—

"On Tuesday last, Mr. Handel's Sacred Grand Oratorio, the *MESSIAH*, was performed in the New Musick Hall in Fishamble-street; the best Judges allowed it to be the most finished piece of Musick. Words are wanting to express the exquisite Delight it afforded to the admiring crowded Audience. The Sublime, the Grand, and the Tender, adapted to the most elevated, majestic and moving Words, conspired to transport and charm the ravished Heart and Ear. It is but Justice to Mr. Handel that the World should know he generously gave the Money arising from this Grand Performance, to be equally shared by the Society for relieving Prisoners, the Charitable Infirmary, and Mercer's Hospital, for which they will ever gratefully remember his Name: and that the Gentlemen of the two Choirs, Mr. Dubourg, Mrs. Avolio, and Mrs. Cibber, who all performed their Parts to Admiration, acted also on the same disinterested Principle, satisfied with the deserved Applause of the Publick, and the conscious Pleasure of promoting such useful and extensive Charity.† There were above 700 People in the Room, and the Sum collected for that Noble and Pious Charity, amounted to about £400, out of which £127 goes to each of the three great and pious Charities."‡

* *Faulkner's Journal*, April 10th to 13th, 1742.

† In the *Dublin Gazette* and in the *Dublin News-Letter* of April 13th to 17th, the same account as in *Faulkner* is given *verbatim* (excepting that the name Avolio is omitted), as far as the words "extensive charity:" but the remainder, as given in *Faulkner*, is omitted.

‡ *Faulkner's Journal*, April 13th to 17th, 1742.

In *Pue's Occurrences* of the same date, the performance is noticed as follows:—

"Tuesday last, Mr. Handel's Sacred Grand Oratorio, 'called the Messiah, was performed in the Musick Room in Fishamble-street, for the benefit of the Charitable Infirmary, Mercer's Hospital, and Releasement of Prisoners, at which upwards of £400 was collected."

Some verses written on the occasion by Mr. Laurence Whyte, who had already expressed in verse his admiration of Handel's music, were published in *Faulkner's Journal*, the week after the performance. They are worthy of preservation, not only as one of the few existing memorials of Handel's visit, but (notwithstanding some incongruity of metaphor) for their good sense and æsthetic justice, and also as a specimen of the sort of versification admitted, in those days, into the public journals:—

"On Mr. Handel's performance of his *Oratorio*, call'd the *Messiah*, for the support of Hospitals and other pious Uses, at the Musick Hall in Fishamble-street, on Tuesday, April 13th, 1742, before the Lords Justices, and a vast Assembly of the Nobility and Gentry of both sexes. By Mr. L. Whyte.

"What can we offer more in *Handel's* praise?
 Since his *Messiah* gain'd him groves of bays;
 Groves that can never wither nor decay,
 Whose *Vistos* his Ability display:
 Here *Nature* smiles, when grac'd with Handel's art,
 Transports the ear, and ravishes the heart;
 To all the nobler *Passions* we are mov'd,
 When various strains repeated and improv'd,
 Express each different Circumstance and State,
 As if each sound became articulate.

None but the great Messiah could inflame,
 And raise his Soul to so Sublime a Theme,

Profound the Thoughts, the subject all divine,
 Not like the tales of *Pindus* and the *Nine* :
 Or Heathen Deities, those Sons of Fiction,
 Sprung from old Fables, stuff'd with contradiction ;
 But our Messiah, blessed be his name !
 Both Heaven and Earth his *Miracles* proclaim.
 His birth, his Passion, and his Resurrection,
 With his ascension have a strong connection ;
 What Prophets spoke, or Sybils could relate,
 In him were all their Prophecies compleat.
 The *Word* made Flesh, both God and Man became ;
 Then let all nations glorify his name !
 Let Halleluiahs round the Globe be sung,
 To our Messiah, from a virgin sprung.”*

Such are the contemporary expressions of the sentiments of the first auditors of this magnificent work. Succeeding generations have ratified their verdict. All subsequent audiences have rendered the same tribute of admiration to the oratorio of the *Messiah*, as was awarded by those who first heard its sublime strains in the Music-Hall in Dublin. It made its impression once and for ever. The delight and astonishment it awakens in the minds of the many to whom, as to myself, music is a sentiment and not a science, are strengthened by the scientific judgments of the great masters of musical art. Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, tendered their fervent applause to the merits of this oratorio, and their homage to the gigantic genius of its composer.†

* *Faulkner's Journal*, April 17th to 20th, 1742.

† When Haydn heard the choruses of the *Messiah*, he said, thoughtfully, “This man is the father of us all.”

Mozart said, “Handel knows best of us all, what is capable of producing a great effect. When he chooses, he can strike like a thunder-bolt.” He paid the noble tribute of writing for the

From the expressions of the first auditors of the *Messiah*, we learn that with them, as with ourselves, it was not the music, merely as music, that commanded their admiration, but the music, as *an expression of the words*. The power and truth with which Handel expresses by music the meaning and spirit of every passage, and of every *word*, that is to say, the power with which he appeals to a responding sentiment in the mind, is his great characteristic.* It is this which has led some to apply

Messiah (and for others of Handel's works) those additional accompaniments which the advanced state of modern instrumentation required.

Beethoven regarded Handel as "the greatest composer that ever lived;" the "monarch" in the realms of music. He used to speak of him with profound fervour and veneration; and said, "I would uncover my head, and kneel down on his tomb." In his last illness, a friend of Beethoven sent him a present of Handel's works in forty folio volumes. They arrived only a few days before his death. The dying musician received them as he lay on his bed. He gazed on the volumes with delight; and, as a gleam of animation illuminated his features, he pointed to them, and said, with feeling and emphasis, "That is the true thing."—*Lives of Haydn and Mozart*, from *Lettres sur Haydn*, published by M. Bayle, under the name of Bombet. Holmes's *Life of Mozart*. *A Day with Beethoven*; Harmonicon, January 1824, and January 1827.

* Harris (author of "Hermes"), in his treatise "on Music, Painting, and Poetry," speaking of music as an imitative art, observes, that its genuine charm is derived from another source than that of mere imitation. The power or efficacy of music, he says, "consists not in imitations, and the raising ideas, but in the raising *Affections*, to which ideas may correspond." It is a narrow view of music to consider it merely as an imitative art. But the distinction taken by Harris is important, and ought to be the guide of musical composers whenever they introduce *imitative* passages. The imitation of sensible objects by music is no better than an amusing trick, unless some poetic sentiment or affection be at the

the epithet *inspired* to the music of the *Messiah*. In the memories of those who have heard it, his music will ever be inseparably associated with the words, as a faithful and eloquent expression of the sentiments or affections naturally excited in their own minds by the words themselves. Musicians of the profoundest science have failed in achieving that touching and admirable expression of the language of Scripture, in which Handel stands unrivalled, whether the sentiment to be expressed be of sorrow or of contempt, of the loftiest sublimity or of the divinest tenderness and beauty.

It needed a rare combination of qualities to do all this. It needed strong religious sentiment, great sympathetic power, vast grandeur and beauty of conception, inventive genius of the highest order, perfect musical science, and exquisite musical feeling. The tears of Handel, it is said, would sometimes drop on his paper, and mingle with his ink, as he penned his divine notes.*

same time awakened in the mind. The imitation of the buzzing of insects in the accompaniment to Handel's chorus in *Israel in Egypt*, "He spake the word and there came all manner of flies," were merely an ingenious trifle, but for the superlative grandeur of the choral passages which tell of the Almighty fiat.

To say that music *imitates* sentiments or emotions of the heart or mind, is an erroneous mode of speaking. Music *expresses* sentiments or emotions, but can no more be said to imitate them, than the shouts of a multitude, or the plaudits of an audience in a theatre, can be said to *imitate* the sentiments of which they are *expressive*.

The imitative music introduced occasionally by Handel in the *Messiah*, as in the passages, "Every valley shall be exalted," "And I will shake the heavens and the earth," "The people that walked in darkness," and in others, is always subordinate to the expression of the *sentiments* proper to the words.

* Shield, *Introduction to Harmony*.

Being questioned as to his ideas and feelings when composing the *Hallelujah chorus*, he replied, "I did think I did see all heaven before me, and the great God himself."*

The performance of this chorus in Westminster Abbey impressed Dr. Burney with a similar train of ideas.

The only part of the music of the *Messiah* not originating in Handel's mind, is the beautiful *Pastoral Symphony* introducing the description of the "shepherds abiding in the field." Its original is one of the ancient traditional melodies, which from time immemorial it has been the custom of the Pifferari, or Calabrian peasantry, to perform during the season of Christmas at Rome, when making a kind of mendicant pilgrimage to the different shrines of the city, in commemoration of the announcement of the Nativity to the shepherds. These melodies are of great antiquity; as old, it is said by the Romans, as the times of Romulus, or perhaps derived from a still earlier period. Handel probably heard this air when he was at Rome, in 1709, and afterwards formed it into the Pastoral Symphony; as deeming, with great justness of feeling, that this ancient and simple pastoral melody, consecrated, as it had been for ages, to the commemoration of the announcement to the shepherds, was the fittest introduction to the narrative of that event in his oratorio.†

* This anecdote is given by Miss Hawkins (daughter of Sir J. Hawkins), in her "Anecdotes," on the authority of Dr. Allott, Dean of Raphoe, who died in 1832.

† In the original manuscript of the *Messiah*, over the Pastoral Symphony, Handel has written the word "*Pif.*;" an abbreviation of Pifferari, or pipers, thereby acknowledging it as a chant of the

After the first performance of the *Messiah*, no advertisement of Handel appeared in the Dublin papers for some time. But an advertisement occurring about a fortnight afterwards in *Faulkner's Journal*, demands to be noticed here, as informing us of the first time that the *Dead March in Saul* was ever performed in Ireland. It was on the 12th of May, at a concert given at the Music-Hall in Fishamble-street, by an Hungarian of the name of Charles, on which occasion, besides "Mr. Handel's Water-Music, with the March in *Scipio*, and the grand chorus in *Atalanta*,"* and other music, there was performed, "The Overture in Saul, with the Dead March, composed by Mr. Handel, but never performed here before." The advertisement adds, "N.B. The Clarinet, the Hautbois d'Amour, and the Shalamo were never heard in this kingdom before.†

On the 8th of May, the following advertisement of Handel appeared in *Faulkner's Journal* :—

"As several of the Nobility and Gentry have desired to hear Mr. Handel's Grand Oratorio of Saul, it will be performed on the 25th Instant, at the New Musick Hall in Fishamble-street, with some Concertos on the Organ. Tickets will be delivered at Mr.

Pifferari. The original melody is given in Dr. Rimbault's preface to his edition of the *Messiah*, published by the Handel Society.

* *Scipio* and *Atalanta*, two of Handel's operas, were composed in 1726 and 1736.

† *Faulkner's Journal*, April 27th to May 1st. By the "Shalamo," is doubtless meant, the Chalameau, of which Dr. Busby gives the following account in his Dictionary of Music :—"CHALAMEAU or *Chalmey*. A wind instrument, so called from the Latin word *Calamus*, a reed through which it is blown. The *Chalameau* has been long improved by the French into the hautboy, and now forms, under that name, one of the most attractive and useful instruments in the orchestra."

Handel's House in Abby street, and at Mr. Neal's in Christ-church-yard, at Half a Guinea each. A Ticket for the Rehearsal (which will be on Friday the 21st) will be given gratis with the Ticket for the Performance. Both the Rehearsal and the Performance will begin at 12 at Noon."*

In *Faulkner's Journal*, of May 18th to 22nd, we read:—

"Yesterday there was a Rehearsal of the Oratorio of Saul, at the Musick Hall in Fishamble-street, at which there was a most grand polite and numerous Audience, which gave such universal Satisfaction, that it was agreed by all the Judges present to have been the finest Performance that hath been heard in this Kingdom."

In the same number of *Faulkner*, the approaching performance of the oratorio is advertised—

"To begin at 7 o'clock. Books to be had at the Musick Hall, Price a British Sixpence."

The performance of *Saul* took place on the appointed evening.†

It will easily be imagined that the production of the *Messiah* had excited a powerful interest in the minds of the people of Dublin; and that many were eagerly hoping for a repetition of the performance. In obedience to an expression of this feeling, the following announcement of a second performance of the *Messiah* appeared in *Faulkner's Journal* on Saturday, the 29th of May:—

"At the Particular Desire of several of the Nobility and Gentry.

"On Thursday next, being the 3d day of June, at the new

* *Faulkner's Journal*, May 8th to 11th, and 11th to 15th, and 15th to 18th, 1742.

† *Faulkner's Journal*, May 22nd to 25th, 1742.

Musick Hall in Fishamble-street, will be performed Mr. Handel's new Grand Sacred Oratorio, called MESSIAH, with Concertos on the Organ. Tickets will be delivered at Mr. Handel's house in Abbey-street, and at Mr. Neal's in Christ-church-yard, at Half a guinea each. A Rehearsal Ticket will be given with the ticket for the Performance. The Rehearsal will be on Tuesday the 1st of June, at Twelve, and the Performance at Seven in the Evening. In order to keep the Room as cool as possible, a Pane of Glass will be removed from the top of each of the Windows.

"N. B. This will be the last Performance of Mr. Handel's during his stay in this Kingdom."*

This was the last public advertisement issued by Handel, during his residence in Ireland. The rehearsal and the performance took place on the several days mentioned.

The traditions of Handel's visit preserved in Dublin, and handed down to our time, are few, and not always to be depended on. It is said that he used to play on the organ at St. Michan's, one of the oldest churches in Dublin, situated a little to the north-west of the site where then stood the Infirmary. He was a frequent visitor at the house of Alexander Lee, an eminent music-seller, on Cork-hill. A gentleman has told me that when he was a boy, he heard Mr. Lee (then a very old man) affirm that Handel composed the *Messiah* in his house on Cork-hill, and that he had seen him in the act of writing it. The truth probably was, that the composer often had the manuscript sheets of the oratorio before him, for the purpose of correcting any errors of the copyist, or of introducing his own second thoughts. And when Mr. Lee, knowing that he was

* *Faulkner's Journal*, May 25th to 29th, and 29th to June 1st, 1742.

at work upon the *new* oratorio he was about to produce, saw him writing on the music-paper, he assumed that he was then engaged in composing the work.

Some reminiscence of Handel during his visit to Ireland, was supplied in a letter to Dr. Burney, dated July 16, 1788, by his friend Dr. Quin, who had known Handel in Dublin, and remembered his performances, and who has already been mentioned in this narrative, as being, in later times, a member of Lord Mornington's musical academy. This gentleman, of whose taste and judgment Dr. Burney speaks very highly, responded to the inquiries which Dr. B., engaged on the fourth volume of his *History of Music*, had made concerning the musical transactions of Handel in Ireland, and particularly about the first performance of the *Messiah*. Dr. Burney valued the information given him by Dr. Quin so highly, as to insert part of his letter in the *History* which he was writing. In this letter, besides his testimony, already quoted in these pages,* concerning the first performance of the *Messiah*, Dr. Quin relates that Handel was received in Ireland by people of the first distinction with all possible marks of esteem, as a man, and admiration as a performer and composer of the highest order: and adds—"There were many noble families here with whom Mr. Handel lived in the utmost degree of friendship and familiarity. Mrs. Vernon, a German lady, who came over with King George I., was particularly intimate with him; and at her house I had the pleasure of seeing and conversing with Mr. Handel; who, with his other excellencies, was possessed of a great stock of humour: no man ever told a story

* *Ante*, pp. 76, 84.

with more. But it was requisite for the hearer to have a competent knowledge of at least four or five languages; English, French, Italian, and German; for in his narratives, he made use of them all.”*

The following extracts from the reply of Dr. Burney to this letter, I am enabled to transfer to these pages, by the kind permission of W. C. Quin, Esq. :—

“TO DR. QUIN, DUBLIN.

“St Martin's Street, London,

“Aug^t 8th, 1788.

“DEAR SIR,

“The renewal of an acquaintance with which I was so much flattered, after an interruption of more than forty years, is a circumstance so unexpected and so fortunate, that I hasten to make my acknowledgments for the honour you have done me in kindly beginning a correspondence, and not only satisfying my enquiries concerning Handel with so much readiness and intelligence, but entering with so much zeal upon the troublesome employment of getting my proposals inserted in the Irish newspapers. With respect to Handel, having already written so much in the Sketch of his life prefixed to the account of the Commemoration, the chief point I wished to settle, was whether the *Messiah* had been performed and slighted in England previous to his going to Ireland, of which the round assertion of his biographer, Mr. Mainwaring, never convinced me; and I am glad, for the Honour of the English, that such injustice and want of taste cannot be proved. I have examined all the newspapers where every species of pub-

* Burney, *Hist. of Music*, vol. iv. p. 661.

lic exhibition was advertised, from Handel's first arrival in England, to his departure for Ireland in the summer of 1741, without finding the least mention of the *Messiah* or Sacred Oratorio, and I am glad to find such a coincidence in our opinions on that subject. The other particulars concerning him during his residence in Dublin, with which you have favoured me, are so truly characteristic, and to my purpose, that I shall certainly contrive to make use of them; before I finish my 4th Vol. though I have already printed my review of all his operas from the original score, and for the present taken leave of him.

“ With respect to my proposals being advertised at full length in your newspapers, the expense will so far surpass my expectations of the advantage that may accrue from it, that it seems most prudent to decline all further thoughts of it. The opening a subscription for the sequel of my History was forced upon me by certain information that the instant it was published a person would abridge the whole, and sell perhaps for half a crown an Epitome of a work of which the materials have already cost me £2000 in collecting; and in digesting, thirty years of all the leisure I could spare from the exercise of my profession, besides the expense of paper, printing, engraving, and advertising. Though the subscription to the first two vols. is very numerous and splendid on paper, yet ‘all is not gold that glitters,’ and from the most illustrious personages in the list, nothing more solid accrued than the leave of inserting their names. I should therefore have left the work to its fate, and have thrown it wholly on the patronage of the public at large, but for the above information from which I am at present delivered by the death of the per-

son who intended me the honour of putting it in execution.

* * * * *

"I had the honour of a short acquaintance a few years ago with your Son, a Gentleman just come from his travels, just sufficient to make me regret the losing sight of him so soon. Miss Quin too, whom I was so fortunate as to meet frequently in London the year before last, is entreated to accept of my best respects. It afforded me great pleasure to find her taste and knowledge in Music so worthy of the daughter of my early and most respected friend and musical counsellor."*

* * * * *

Besides the performances given by Handel, there were several public concerts during his stay in Dublin. Signora Avolio had two concerts for her benefit, at the Music-Hall, on the 5th of April and on the 16th of June. At Mrs. Arne's concert, which took place on the 21st of July, Mrs. Cibber and Mrs. Arne performed selections from *Esther*, *Saul*, *Il Penseroso*, and from Handel's Operas of *Faramond*, *Sosarmes*, and *Hymen*. The song in *Esther*, "O beauteous Queen," was sung by Mrs. Cibber.† There were other concerts also.

One evening, at one of these concerts, Dubourg, having a solo part in a song, and a close to make *ad libitum*, wandered for a great while through different keys, till he seemed perplexed, and uncertain of his original key; but on his regaining it at length, and ter-

* From the original letter of Dr. Burney, in the possession of W. C. Quin, Esq. The signature of the original is lost.

† *Faulkner's Journal* and *Dublin News-Letter*, July 13th to 17th, 1742.

minating this long close with a shake, Handel, to the great amusement of the audience, called out, in a loud voice, "You are welcome home, Mr. Dubourg!"*

After his second performance of the *Messiah*, Handel remained for upwards of two months in Ireland. He then bid farewell, but intending soon to return to a country where his reception had been most gratifying to himself, and honourable to the people who received him, and whose kindness he had reciprocated by liberally concurring in their works of charity and beneficence. After a residence of nearly nine months in Ireland, he sailed from Dublin on Friday the 13th of August, 1742. His departure was thus noticed in the *Dublin News-Letter* of the following day:—

Yesterday, the Right Hon. the Lady King, the celebrated Mr. Handel, and several other Persons of Distinction, embarked on board one of the Chester Traders, in order to go to Parkgate."†

And thus, in the ensuing number of *Faulkner*:—

"Last week, Lady King, widow of the late Rt. Hon. Sir Harry King, Bart, and the celebrated Mr. Handel, so famous for his excellent Compositions and fine Performance with which he entertained this Town in the most agreeable Manner, embarked for England."‡

On the return of Handel to London, he received a warm welcome from his friends; and found, also, that during his absence, a considerable change had begun to take place in the sentiments of many of his enemies.

* Burney, Sketch, &c.

† *Dublin News-Letter*, from Tuesday, August 10, to Saturday, 14, 1742.

‡ *Faulkner's Journal*, August 14th to 17th, 1742.

The circumstance of his having relinquished all idea of opposition to the managers of the Italian opera, had somewhat of a conciliatory effect with several; and the enthusiastic reception which he had met in Dublin, seemed to reproach those whose neglect and opposition had forced him to seek for justice and right feeling in another part of the empire.* The opposition did not, indeed, suddenly or entirely cease. He still had many enemies, but he had also powerful friends. One especial testimony to his genius and abilities, which had recently been given to the public, must have had considerable influence on the minds of many, in facilitating the triumph of his return. During his absence in Ireland, in the spring of 1742, Pope had published the fourth book of the *Dunciad*,† in which, adopting the estimate of Handel's merits, which competent judges, such as their mutual friends Lord Burlington and Dr. Arbuthnot had pronounced, he advocated his cause, and directed a battery of satire against his enemies. In this poem, the author describes the "fluttering form," or personification of the Italian opera, as addressing the mighty goddess Dulness, and invoking her powerful assistance in crushing so formidable a rival as Handel. Dulness is seated on a throne, while, in the graphic language of the poet—

"Beneath her footstool, Science groans in chains,
And Wit dreads exile, penalties, and pains.
There foam'd rebellious Logic, gagg'd and bound,
There stript, fair Rhet'ric languished on the ground."

* Hawkins, *Hist. of Music*, vol. v. p. 359.

† *Gentleman's Magazine*, March, 1742.

And the pretty Italian—

“By singing peers upheld on either hand,
She tript and laugh'd, too pretty much to stand.”

— after a pathetic appeal for the “chromatic tortures” of the opera, concludes with the lines—

“But soon, ah soon! rebellion will commence,
If music meanly borrows aid from sense:
Strong in new arms, lo! Giant Handel stands,
Like bold Briareus, with a hundred hands;
To stir, to rouse, to shake the soul, he comes,
And Jove's own thunders follow Mars's drums.
Arrest him, Empress, or you sleep no more!
She heard, and drove him to th' Hibernian shore.”*

These lines of Pope allude to those grand orchestral effects in which Handel delighted, and of which he was the inventor. To his inventive genius, Sir John Hawkins says, that we owe the discovery of the sublime in

* The following note, written by Pope and Warburton in conjunction, is appended to the words, “And Jove's own thunders,” &c., in this passage of the Dunciad:—“Mr. Handel had introduced a great number of hands, and more variety of instruments into the orchestra, and employed even drums and cannon to make a fuller chorus; which proved so much too manly for the fine gentlemen of his age, that he was obliged to remove his music into Ireland.”

What authority Pope and Warburton had for their assertion that Handel ever *used* cannon, I know not. Hawkins and Burney mention no such thing: but I remember hearing, many years ago, from a very respectable authority in matters of musical history, the tradition that Handel once, during the performance of one of his choruses, exclaimed, with enthusiasm, “Oh! that I had cannon!”

music.* Feeling, in common with all great artists, that his ideas were beyond his powers of expression, that the powers of the orchestra were inadequate to convey the grandeur of his conceptions, he is said to have wished for cannon to give additional emphasis to some of the great points in his choruses.† But the genius and powers of Handel were not limited to the grand style of music. They were fitted equally for the beautiful as for the sublime. Even in his most stupendous choruses he preserves the most graceful melody. His minuets are exquisite instances of the *line of elegance* in music. His songs take us through a vast range and variety of human sentiment.

The grateful and pleasant feelings with which Handel

* Hist. of Music, vol. v. p. 418.

† The transformation of a sublime idea into the little and ludicrous, as it passes through the minds of some people, is happily illustrated in a burletta called *Jupiter*, the joint and youthful production of the Right Hon. R. B. Sheridan, and his school-fellow, Mr. Halhed. It was the early modelling of Sheridan's more mature work, *The Critic*, and, like it, presents a rehearsal of a play, which the author, Mr. Simile, and his friends are assembled to witness. Jupiter sings a song :—

" You dogs, I'm Jupiter Imperial,
King, Emperor, and Pope ætherial,
Master of th' ordnance of the sky."

The author hearing no response to this *cue* of Jupiter Tonans, exclaims, "Where's the ordnance? Have you forgot the pistol?" Tom, behind the scenes, explains that the pistol had flashed in the pan. Whereupon, the song is begun again; and at the words, "Master of the ordnance of the sky," according to the stage directions, "a pistol or cracker is fired behind the scenes." The author then, with infinite satisfaction, informs his friends—"This hint I took from Handel!"

remembered his residence in Ireland are recorded by himself, in a letter to his friend at Gopsall Hall, written shortly after his return to London :—

“ To CHARLES JENNENS, Esq., Junior
at Gopsal near Altenstone,
Coventry bag.

“ London, Sept^r 9th 1742.

“ Dear S^r

“ It was indeed your humble Servant which intended you a Visit in my way from Ireland to London, for I certainly would have given you a better account by word of Mouth, as by writing, how well your Messiah was received in that Country, yet as a Noble Lord, and not less than the Bishop of Elphin* (a Nobleman very learned in Musick) has given his Observations in writing on this Oratorio, I send you here annexed the contents of it in his own words. I shall send the printed Book of the Messiah to Mr. J. Steel for you.

“ As for my success in general in that generous and polite Nation, I reserve the account of it till I have the Honour to see you in London. The report that the Direction of the Opera next winter is committed to my Care, is groundless. The Gentlemen who have undertaken to middle with Harmony cannot agree, and are quite in a confusion. Whether I shall do something in the Oratorio way (as several of my friends desire) I cannot determine as yet. Certain it is, that this time

* Edward Synge, D.D. (son of Dr. Edward Synge, Archbishop of Tuam, who died in 1741), had been a Fellow of Trinity College, Dublin; and was successively Bishop of Clonfert, Cloyne, Ferns and (in 1740) of Elphin. He died in 1762.

12-month I shall continue my Oratorios in Ireland, where they are going to make a large subscription all-ready for that Purpose.

"If I had known that My Lord Guernsey was so near when I passed Coventry, you may easily imagine, Sir, that I should not have neglected of paying my Respects to him, since you know the particular Esteem I have for his Lordship. I think it a very long time to the Month of November next, when I can have some hopes of seeing you here in Town. Pray let me hear meanwhile of your Health and Wellfare, of which I take a real share, being with an uncommon Sincerity and Respect

"S^r

"Your

"most obliged humble servant

"GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL."*

The organ on which Handel had performed in the Music-Hall in Dublin, being taken down, the Charitable Musical Society erected another in its stead, for their concerts for the ensuing winter.†


Two organs which belonged to Handel are preserved in Dublin, One of them, brought by Handel to Ireland, became the property of the Marquis of Ely, at whose family residence, at Rathfarnham, near Dublin, it remained for many years. It was purchased from the late Marquis, by Francis Johnston, Esq., the eminent architect, who removed it to his house, 60, Eccles-

* From the original letter of Handel in the possession of Earl Howe.

† *Faulkner's Journal*, Sept. 18th to 21st, and 25th to 28th, 1742.

street, Dublin. On the death of Mr. Johnston, the organ, together with the house in Eccles-street, became the property of William Seale, Esq., who is at present the proprietor of this interesting relic. In the year 1845, after the death of Mr. Johnston, when his vast collection of works of fine art was sold by auction, Handel's organ, though not intended to be sold, was exhibited to public view, amid the treasures of art by which it was surrounded. In the auctioneer's catalogue, published on the occasion, it appears as the last article (Number 1440) in the list, and is described as follows:—

“Handel's Organ; this fine-toned Instrument was brought to this country by the eminent Composer, and by him styled his Portable Organ, 8 feet 1 wide, 7 feet 6 high, 2 feet 10 deep.

“ Purchased at the Marquis of Ely's sale. Private property, not to be sold.”

It is in excellent preservation; not a pipe of the original fabric has been altered or removed.

The other organ, an old German instrument, which is said, on good authority, to have belonged to Handel, is in the chapel of the Blue Coat Hospital in Dublin. For several years it was in the possession of the Earl of Mornington; and was afterwards used for a long time, as the parish organ at old St. Paul's Church in Dublin; on the pulling down of which, and the building of the new church, in 1821, it was transferred to the chapel of the Blue Coat Hospital.*

* With these particulars concerning the organ in the Blue Coat Hospital, I have been favoured by Mr. Geary, organist of the institution, who succeeded his father in that office, from whom he received the above account.

Whether either of these instruments was used by Handel in the Music-Hall in Fishamble-street, I am unable to say.

The Charitable Musical Society opened their concerts for the winter, with a performance of *Acis and Galatea*, in their Music-Hall, on the evening of December 17th, 1742. The Coronation Anthem, *Zadok the Priest*, was also performed; and Dubourg played a new solo. Both the choirs assisted, together with Mrs. Arne and other singers. The tickets were half a guinea each; and the ladies were requested to come without hoops.*

The usual annual performance for the benefit of Mercer's Hospital, took place in St. Andrew's Church, on the 8th of February following; the music consisting of Handel's Utrecht *Te Deum*, *Jubilate*, and two new anthems.†

In the Lent of 1743, Handel commenced a new career in London, with a series of twelve oratorio performances by subscription, at Covent Garden Theatre. He opened the series with his seventh and newly-composed oratorio of *Samson*, the words from Milton's tragedy of "Samson Agonistes." It was performed for several nights, to crowded houses, with complete success, and was soon disseminated in single songs throughout the kingdom.‡

The following account of the reception of this noble work was inserted, from a private letter, in *Faulkner's Journal*. It will be seen that Handel's friend, Du-

* *Faulkner's Journal*, Nov. 27th to 30th, &c., &c., 1742.

† *Faulkner's Journal*, Feb. 1st to 5th, &c., &c., 1742.

‡ Burney.

bourg, had followed him to London, to witness and partake his triumph :—

“ Extract of a private letter from London, March 8.

“ ‘ Our Friend Mr. Handel is very well, and Things have taken a quite different Turn here from what they did some time past ; for the Publick will be no longer imposed on by Italian Singers and wrong-headed Undertakers of bad Operas, but find out the Merit of Mr. Handell's Compositions and English Performances. That Gentleman is more esteemed now than ever. The new Oratorio (called SAMSON) which he composed since he left Ireland, has been performed four Times to more crowded Audiences than ever were seen ; more people being turned away for want of Room, each Night, than hath been at the Italian Opera. Mr. Dubourg, (lately arrived from Dublin) performed at the last, and met with uncommon applause from the Royal Family and the whole Audience.’ ”*

After several performances of *Samson*, the *Messiah*, announced in the advertisement as “ a sacred oratorio,” was produced for the first time in London, on Wednesday, the 23rd of March, the ninth night of the series. This was the third time it was ever performed. It was afterwards performed twice in the same season. Its sublime strains made the same impression in London as in Dublin, and were received with universal admiration and applause.†

The following anecdotes concerning the first performance of the *Messiah* in London, are related, on the authority of the Earl of Kinnoul, who died in 1787, by Dr. Beattie, author of “ The Minstrel,” in a letter to Dr. Laing, dated “ Aberdeen, 25th May, 1780 :”—

“ When this piece was first performed, the audience

* *Faulkner's Journal*, March 12th to 15th, 1742–3.

† Burney.

were exceedingly struck and affected by the music in general; but when the chorus struck up 'For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth,' they were so transported, that they all, with the King who happened to be present, started up, and remained standing till the chorus ended; and hence it became the fashion in England to stand while that part of the music is performing.

"Some days after the first exhibition of this divine oratorio, Mr. Handel went to pay his respects to Lord Kinnoul, with whom he was particularly acquainted. His lordship, as was natural, paid him some compliments on the noble entertainment which he had lately given to the town. 'My lord,' said Handel, 'I should be sorry if I only entertained them; I wish to make them better.'

"These two anecdotes," Dr. Beattie adds, "I had from Lord Kinnoul himself. You will agree with me that the first does great honour to Handel, to music, and to the English nation: the second tends to confirm my theory and Sir John Hawkins's testimony, that Handel, in spite of all that has been said to the contrary, must have been a pious man."*

That the mind of Handel was imbued with a strong and permanent religious sentiment, will not be denied by those who are acquainted with human nature, and who have perused the testimonies of his biographers. Of his feelings and ideas when writing the *Hallelujah chorus*, his own account has been already given. It is impossible to listen to the music of the *Messiah* without recognising the feelings of a religious and highly-gifted

* Forbes's Life of Beattie, vol. ii. pp. 79, 80, Letter 146.

mind. He was well acquainted with the Holy Scriptures.* When the bishops sent him a selection of words for the anthems which he was to compose for the coronation of George II., he regarded their message as an imputation on his knowledge of Scripture, and replied, "I have read my Bible very well, and shall chuse for myself;" which he did accordingly. Later in life, he frequently avowed with gratitude, the benefit he had derived from the contemplation of passages in the Scriptures. The wish expressed by him to Lord Kinnoul was that of a man who felt that his talents were a stewardship entrusted to him; that the powers of a composer of sacred music, and the faculties of the audience, were given them for higher purposes than merely the giving or receiving of an elegant entertainment.

A citation of those faults already mentioned, which were habitual with him before a serious change took place in his character, is no refutation of this view of the case. Such a charge affords as little of a sound argument, as in the cases of other men (Dr. Johnson, for example), whose religious sentiment, though existing in considerable strength, proved insufficient to guard them from inconsistencies. It is difficult, sometimes, to estimate the sincerity of that religious and moral principle, which, in some men, we may observe surviving the severest trials of life, and yet unable to assume its proper supremacy over their minds and actions. Yet it is not the less true, that such a principle exists naturally in some men more than in others. And one of the lessons we may learn from such examples, is the utter insufficiency of such natural sentiments, however

* Hawkins's History of Music, vol. v. p. 354.

good in themselves, to maintain the requisite dominion over the character and conduct. We may learn that not only they whose natural characters are compared to the wayside, or to stony or thorny ground, but even they who have that which is "beautiful and good"* in their nature, must receive the seed of *the sower*, before they can "bring forth fruit with patience."

The custom of standing during the performance of the *Hallelujah chorus* may be ascribed to a better origin than the transmission of a fashion. The words, and the grandeur with which they are enunciated in the chorus, have made many an audience, who were not thinking of conforming to a fashion, rise in reverence from their seats, under the influence of sentiments which "do great honour to Handel, to music," and to human nature.

Handel was a Lutheran. He held the musical compositions of Martin Luther in high esteem. Sir J. Hawkins relates that on one occasion, Handel asserted that some of the finest melodies used in the German churches were composed by Luther, particularly that which, in England, is sung to the hundredth psalm, and another which himself sung at the time.†

On the 4th of May, 1743, Handel's cantata of *Alexander's Feast* was performed at the Great Music-Hall in Fishamble-street, for the benefit of the Chari-

* Εὖ καρδία καλὴ καὶ ἀγαθὴ. In an honest (or beautiful) and good heart.—Luke, viii. 15.

† Hist. of Music, vol. v. p. 415. Though Handel was without a voice, yet so perfect was his musical feeling and judgment, that at a private concert, being prevailed on to sing a slow song, he did it in such a manner, that Farinelli, who was present, would hardly be prevailed on to sing after him.

table Infirmary on the Inn's-quay. The choirs of both cathedrals, Mrs. Arne, and several other singers assisted. The performance brought upwards of one hundred and fifty pounds to the charity.*

The victory obtained by George II. at Dettingen, on the 16th of June, 1743, gave Handel an opportunity of exerting his genius to the utmost, in the grand *Te Deum* which, by command of the King, he composed on the occasion. This great work has always been considered one of his noblest compositions. It was rehearsed before a splendid assembly at Whitehall Chapel, on the 18th of November, and performed before the King, at the Chapel Royal, St. James's, on Sunday, the 27th.†

In this year he also produced other celebrated works. He never fulfilled his intention of returning to Ireland. Probably he was sufficiently satisfied with the favourable change wrought in the current of his fortunes, and deemed it more advisable to remain in London. But the enthusiasm caused by his performances in Dublin was producing its fruits, and was not likely soon to cease.

In November, the Charitable Musical Society of Dublin, announced that a performance of the *Messiah*, for the benefit of the prisoners in the Marshalseas, would take place in their Music-Hall, on the evening of the 16th of December following, with a previous rehearsal on the 12th, at noon. Their advertisements

* *Dublin News-Letter*, April 5th to 9th, 1743, and *Faulkner's Journal*, Feb. 11th to 14th, 1743-4.

† *Faulkner's Journal*, Nov. 22nd to 26th, and December 3rd to 6th, 1743, from a London paper.

to this effect were repeated for about a fortnight,* when they were obliged to postpone the performance, for reasons stated by them in the following notice :—

“From the Charitable Musical Society. The said society having obtained from the celebrated Mr. Handell, a copy of the Score of the Grand Musical Entertainment, called the *Messiah*, they intended to have it rehearsed on the 12th, and performed on the 16th of December, Inst. for the Benefit and Enlargement of Prisoners confined for Debt, pursuant to their advertisements; and in order to have it executed in the best Manner, they had prevailed on Mr. Dubourg to give them his Assistance, and also applied by a Deputation of the Society to the members of the Choirs of the two Cathedrals to assist therein, (the necessary approbation of their so doing being first obtained on due Application) which several of them promised, and at a Meeting for that Purpose, chose and received their Parts; but after Preparations had been made, at considerable Expence, to the Surprise of the Society, several of the Members of the said Choirs, (some of whom had engaged as before mentioned) thought fit to decline performing, and returned their Parts, for Reasons that no way related to or concerned the said Society; they are therefore obliged to postpone that Entertainment until Friday the 3rd day of February next, to the great Detriment and Delay of their Charitable Intentions, the good Effects whereof have been manifested for several years past. By that time the Society will provide such Performers as will do justice to that Sublime Composition, and for the future will take such measures as shall effectually free them from Apprehension of a second Disappointment to the Publick or themselves.”†

This and another notice on the subject of a report that the intended performance would not take place,

* *Faulkner's Journal*, Nov. 15th to 19th, &c., to Dec. 3rd, 1743.

† *Faulkner's Journal*, Dec. 3rd to 6th, 1743.

appeared in several numbers of *Faulkner*. In January, the following advertisement appeared :—

“From the Charitable Musical Society. The said Society think themselves obliged to give the Publick an account, that in the year 1742, they released out of the several Marshalseas in and about this City, 142 Prisoners, whose principal Debts and Fees amounted to the sum of £1225 17s. 1d. besides £33 given in Charity to poor creditors and out-going Prisoners.”*

In a later number of *Faulkner*, is the following account of a private rehearsal of the *Messiah* :—

“We hear that the Oratorio called the MESSIAH was privately rehearsed last Night in the Presence of some of the best Judges, who expressed the utmost satisfaction on the Occasion. This fine piece is to be publicly rehearsed on Wednesday next at Noon, for the Benefit and Enlargement of Prisoners confined for Debt; and as the audience will be very numerous, we hear the Ladies have resolved to come without Hoops, as when the same was performed by Mr. Handel.”†

The following notices appeared in *Faulkner's Journal* of Jan. 31st to Feb. 4th, 1743-4.

“From the Charitable Musical Society for the Relief of poor Prisoners.

“The Society beg leave respectfully to address themselves to the Ladies, and to appeal to such of them as were at the public Rehearsal last Wednesday, for the necessity of this their Request, that had the Ladies laid aside their Hoops, the Musick Hall would contain an hundred Persons more with full ease. As this Entertainment is exhibited for a very Charitable Account, and that the

* *Faulkner's Journal*, Jan. 10th to 14th, 1743-4.

† *Faulkner's Journal*, Jan. 28th to 31st, 1743-4.

chief intent of the Assembly is Charity, they humbly hope the Ladies will not take amiss to be requested to lay aside a *Mode*, (for one evening) however Ornamental on other Occasions. N.B. On Account of Lord Netterville's Tryal, the Grand Performance of the sacred Oratorio of the Messiah is put off to Tuesday the 7th inst. to begin at 6 o'clock in the Evening precisely.

"We hear from all hands of the great satisfaction given last Wednesday to a crowded Audience, at the Rehearsal of the sacred Oratorio of the Messiah; nothing can come up to the choice of the subject, the Words are those of the sacred Text, the Musick extremely well adapted, and the execution, under Mr. Dubourg's Direction, by the most celebrated Band of Vocal and Instrumental Musick, was carried on through all the Parts with universal applause."

On the 27th of the same month, there was a performance of the *Messiah*, in the Great Music-Hall, for the support of the Infirmary.*

In the winter season, commencing in the following October, the Philharmonic Society of Dublin, "at their Musick-Room in Fishamble-street," performed *Esther*, *Athalia*, *Acis and Galatea*, *Israel in Egypt*, and *Alexander's Feast*, by Handel; and also, "Solomon, Mr. Lockman's Ode, on St. Cecilia's Day, David's Lamentation over Saul and Jonathan, and Mr. Hart's Pindaric ode, composed by Mr. Boyce, &c. &c."†

The excitement caused by the recent visit of Handel to Dublin, and the admiration attending the performances of his works, proved to be a public benefit. It became the custom to perform his oratorios and cantatas, for the benefit, not only of the charitable institutions already existing, but also of several medical

* *Faulkner's Journal*, Feb. 11th to 14th, 1743-4.

† *Faulkner's Journal*, Oct., 1744.

charities, which, about this time, were established in the Irish metropolis. This custom was kept up for many years. Besides Mercer's Hospital and the Infirmary, the Lying-in Hospital and the Hospital for Incurables derived repeated benefit, from frequent performances of his music. Perhaps the works of no other composer have so largely contributed to the relief of human suffering, as those of this illustrious musician.

The Dettingen *Te Deum* was performed at St. Michan's Church in Dublin, with Handel's *Jubilate*, and two anthems, "for the support of Mercer's Hospital," on the 14th of February, 1745; "Some Persons of Quality, and many Gentlemen obliged the Governors with their assistance in the Performance."* In the minute-book of Mercer's Hospital, there are entries of orders on this occasion, by the governors, that application be made to the Lord Chancellor and the twelve judges, to adjourn their courts on the day of performance. Similar orders (including application to the Speaker of the Irish House of Commons to adjourn the House) are to be found in the minute-book of Mercer's, on several later occasions of annual performances for the benefit of the hospital.

In London, after the production of *Samson*, Handel produced, during many successive years, a glorious series of oratorios and other works. His oratorios, after *Samson*, were—*Belshazzar*, *Susanna*, *Occasional Oratorio*, *Joseph*, *Judas Maccabæus*, *Joshua*, *Alexander*

* *Faulkner's Journal*, Feb. 12th to 16th, 1744-5. An entry in the minute-book of Mercer's Hospital, mentions that Mr. Putland and Dean Hutchinson were desired by the governors to apply to Dubourg for the necessary music on this occasion.

Balus, Solomon, Theodora, and (in 1751) Jephtha. He produced also, the cantatas of *Semele, Hercules, and the Triumph of Time and Truth.**

To Mr. Jennens of Gopsall he was indebted for the words of several of his oratorios, for which in his correspondence with that gentleman, he expresses his obligations, as furnishing him with subjects which gave him opportunity of expressing his musical ideas.

Mr. Jennens had his own ideas concerning the musical expression of the words of the *Messiah*, and objected to several passages in Handel's composition. Handel, who had great respect for his friend's judgment in music, wrote to him,† saying, with the modesty of true genius, "Be pleased to point out those passages in the *Messiah*, which you think require altering." The following extract from a letter of Mr. Jennens to some unknown correspondent, will show that Handel adopted in part, the suggestions of Mr. Jennens:—

"Gopsall, Aug. 30, 1745.

"* * * * * In your last letter but one you talk'd something of reading a foolish hasty performance of mine, but 'tis not fit for your perusal, therefore think no more of it: but I shall show you a collection I gave Handel, call'd *Messiah*, which I value highly, and he has made a fine Entertainment of it, tho' not near so good as he might and ought to have done. I have with great difficulty made him correct some of the grossest faults in the composition, but he

* This cantata was mostly taken from *Il Trionfo del Tempo*, composed by Handel in 1709, at Rome, and there performed.

† July 19, 1744.

retain'd his Overture obstinately, in which there are some passages far unworthy of Handel, but much more unworthy of the Messiah.

“ Dear Sir

“ Your most affectionate

“ Friend & Serv^t

“ C. JENNENS.”*

It will not be supposed, that by the expression, “ faults in the composition,” Mr. Jennens meant errors of harmony, such as forbidden progressions, and the like. Handel, “ the unequalled master of all masters,” as Beethoven called him, was a better judge of such matters than Mr. Jennens. We are rather to seek for an explanation, in the theory, that Mr. Jennens, in giving Handel, to set to music, the collection, which he “ valued highly,” of Scripture passages relating to the *Messiah*, had his own ideas and feelings of the requisite expression of these passages ; and that the expression or interpretation given to them by Handel did not in all instances meet and satisfy his ideas. In this there was nothing extraordinary. Every man of poetic and artistic character, like Mr. Jennens, has such ideas and feelings of his own. An instance of this was given by the poet Gray. When Smith, a pupil of Handel, proposed to set “ The Bard ” to music, Gray gave in writing, his own ideas of what the overture ought to be, and also marked which passages in the ode “ should be recitative, which air, what kind of air, and how accom-

* From the original letter of Mr. Jennens, in the possession of Earl Howe.

panied.”* Smith’s design was never executed; but if it had, Gray would have compared the music with his own previous ideas, and might have objected to any part of it as not expressive of his own feelings or conceptions. In fact, they only who have this æsthetic faculty, are capable of understanding or criticising works of fine art.

Even the artist himself, whether musician, sculptor, painter, architect, or poet, must compare his work with his own ideas, and will often feel his inability to realize, in his work, the perfection which he conceives and feels in the solitude of his own intellect. The greater the genius of the artist, and the higher its cultivation, the more intimately will he perceive that he cannot work *up to his ideas*.

But though Mr. Jennens had a right to his own æsthetic sentiments, it were well that he had abstained from such expressions as “gross faults;” and charging Handel with “obstinacy” for refusing always to adopt his suggestions. He should rather have sat at the feet of such a master as Handel, in the teachable spirit of a little child. Interference with the conceptions of a great artist, is a delicate task. Whether the criticisms of Mr. Jennens were just, must be left to those who can ascertain which of the alterations made by Handel, from time to time, in the work, may be traced to the suggestions of Mr. Jennens.

Handel, it appears by the foregoing extract, steadily retained the overture to the *Messiah*, notwithstanding the censure of Mr. Jennens, that it contained passages beneath the dignity of the subject.

* Mason, *Works of Gray*.

Few will deem the majestic movement which commences the overture, with its grand succession of chords that come rolling on, one after the other, like great billows of the ocean, unimpressive or beneath the dignity of the subject. The second movement, or fugue, suggests to some minds, the development of a great theme or design.

Although the tone of popular feeling in London had undergone, in great degree, a change favourable to Handel, yet for several years after his return from Ireland, he had to encounter the effects of malice and illiberality. Some implacable persons of distinction, who, it is to be presumed, knew no moral rule of action save their own wills, used to have large card assemblies on the nights of his oratorios, with the manifest intention of diminishing the number of his audiences.* This conduct was the more remarkable, as such assemblies were not usual in the season of Lent. Dr. Burney, who came to London in 1744, records his remembrance of private concerts at the house of a Lady Brown, who, he tells us, "distinguished herself as a persevering enemy to Handel, and a protectress to foreign musicians, in general, of the new Italian style; and was one of the first persons of fashion who had the courage, at the risk of her windows, to have concerts of a Sunday evening."†

So powerful was the impression made by the oratorio of the *Messiah*, that it always drew crowded houses; as also did *Samson* and *Judas Maccabæus*; but Handel's other oratorios were frequently performed to audiences so scanty, as not to defray his expenses. Even the pre-

* Burney. Hawkins.

† Hist. of Music, vol. iv.

sence of the King, who continued his steady patronage of Handel, so little ensured a full attendance on these occasions, that one oratorio night, Lord Chesterfield being met coming out of the theatre, excused himself by saying, "I came away, not chusing to disturb the king in his privacies."

The necessary expenses of providing an orchestra on a large and liberal scale, were more than the reduced means of Handel, unremunerated by the performances, could sustain; and in 1745, he became a bankrupt.* By living prudently, however, he retrieved his fortunes. In later years, his profits amounted to more than two thousand pounds a season.

At this period, Handel maintained the same proud superiority in his profession as ever. Dr. Burney, quoting, with a slight alteration, the words of the charge of Cassius against Julius Cæsar (though not, like Cassius, by way of accusation), says of him, that at this time, he "did bestride the musical world like a Colossus."† At the concerts at Carlton House, not even the presence of royalty could restrain the rage and impetuosity of the irritable and fine-nerved musician, if there was any talking or other interruption to the music. The tone of voice in which, at the close of an air, he shouted out, "*Chorus!!!*" is described as extremely formidable. At these concerts, Handel noticed the early predilection evinced by the young Prince, afterwards

* Hogarth, *Musical History*, &c., vol. i. p. 207.

† Hawkins, vol. v. p. 411.

‡ "Why man, he doth bestride the narrow world,
Like a Colossus, and we petty men
Walk under his huge legs."—*Julius Cæsar*, Act. I. Sc. 2.

George III., for his music. On one occasion, Handel observed to those near him, "You will see that this young Prince will keep up my music after I am gone." A prophecy which was truly fulfilled.*

Influenced by feelings of benevolence and humanity, Handel resolved to give an annual performance of the *Messiah*, for the benefit of the Foundling Hospital in London. These performances, directed by himself to the end of his life, produced many thousands of pounds for the charity. He presented to the institution, a fair copy of the score of the *Messiah*. The directors so curiously mistook the nature of the gift, as to imagine that the composer meant to give them an exclusive right to the performance of the oratorio, and were going to apply for an Act of Parliament to that effect. They sent a deputation to Handel to ask his concurrence. This was too much for the generous composer, who, amid his difficulties, had acted with such extraordinary benevolence to the institution. So absurd and ungrateful a return roused his indignation: he burst into a rage, and exclaimed, "Te teufel! for what sall de Foundlings put mein oratorio in de Parliament? Te teufel! mein moosic sall not go to de Parliament!"

* The musical judgment and feeling of this Monarch were of a high order. Dr. Burney had the good sense to cancel his own remarks on the chorus in the *Messiah*, "He trusted in God," which were already printed in his account of the Commemoration of Handel, and to substitute those which the King had sent him. The King, observing on "*the moral merit*" of this "choral fugue," remarks that "the words contain a manifest presumption and impertinence, which Handel has in the most masterly manner, taken advantage of." The critical note in the handwriting of George III. was preserved by Dr. Burney, and is given in his memoirs by his daughter, Madame D'Arblay.

The characteristic impetuosity and irritability of Handel were not the result of malevolence, ill-nature, or selfishness. They proceeded, in great measure, from the exquisite delicacy of his artistic temperament. A false note would put him in a rage; but his anger, though vented in a manner which often caused much amusement to those who witnessed its ebullitions, never deprived him of the essential kindness and goodness of his disposition. His temperament was manifested in what Sir John Hawkins relates of him, that "he wrote very fast, but with a degree of impatience, proportioned to the eagerness that possesses men of genius, of seeing their conceptions reduced into form."* He had a great deal of humour; and even in his moments of impatience and irritation, dealt in sallies of wit and pleasantry.

In 1751, Handel was attacked with incipient gutta serena, which ended in total blindness. This event put an end to his career as a writer of music, but did not in the least impair his powers as a performer on the organ.† He ceased to conduct his band himself; and entrusted that office to his friend and scholar, Mr. Smith. He thus continued his oratorios to the very last. The extempore pieces which he played between the acts of the oratorios, were as finely conceived, and as admirably executed as ever. It was an affecting spectacle to see the venerable Handel, blind and aged, led to the organ, and then brought forward to make his bow to the audience. When the words of Milton—"Total eclipse! no sun, no moon!" were sung in the

* Hist. of Music, vol. v. p. 412.

† The duet and chorus in *Judas Maccabæus*, "Sion now his head shall raise," were dictated to Mr. Smith, by Handel, after the total loss of his sight.—Burney.

oratorio of *Samson*, to his own pathetic music, many of the audience, as they beheld the blind composer seated near the organ, were moved to tears.

The loss of his sight, which at first greatly depressed his spirits, was attended with marked effects on his character. Combined with the prospect of the eternal change which was drawing nigh to him, it wrought a great improvement in his temper and general behaviour. He frequently expressed the pleasure he had derived from setting the Scriptures to music, and the benefit he had received from contemplating the many sublime passages in the book of the sweet Psalmist of Israel, with whom he might truly say, "Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage."* As the end of his earthly career approached, his religious sentiments became exalted into serious and solid piety, attended with calmness of mind and of temper.

The affecting record by Sir J. Hawkins, of the latter days of Handel, will ever be read with the deepest interest:—"For the last two or three years of his life," says that writer, "he was used to attend divine service in his own parish church of St. George, Hanover-square, where, during the prayers, the eyes that at this instant are employed in a faint portrait of his excellencies, have seen him on his knees, expressing by his looks and gesticulations the utmost fervour of devotion."†

In consequence of the enfeebled state of his health, it was with extreme difficulty that he attended his oratorios latterly. Only a week before his death, he appeared for the last time in public, at a performance of the

* Psalm cxix. 54.

† History of Music, vol. v. p. 409.

Messiah, on the 6th of April, 1759, when he played on the organ as usual.* On returning home, he went to his bed, and never rose from it again. For several days before his death, he expressed the wish that he might breathe his last on Good Friday, "in hopes," he said, "of meeting his good God, his sweet Lord and Saviour, on the day of his resurrection;" meaning the Easter Sunday following. His wish was granted to him. He expired on the morning of Good Friday, the 13th of April, 1759, in the seventy-fifth year of his age, and after a residence of forty-nine years in England.

He was interred, on the Friday succeeding his death, in Poet's Corner, in Westminster Abbey. The Dean, Prebendaries, and the whole choir attended, to pay the last honours to his memory; and not less than three thousand persons were present at his obsequies.†

In the floor of Poet's Corner, a flat grave-stone over the remains of Handel is inscribed with his coat of arms, his name, and the dates of his birth and death. Above his grave, in the wall, under the clerestory, is a splendid monument by Roubiliac, representing this man of divine genius in the act of composing the *Messiah*, and setting the words, "I know that my Redeemer liveth," to music, suggested to him by an angel.

Handel had lived to retrieve his worldly fortunes. He died possessed of considerable wealth, which, with the exception of a thousand pounds to the fund for the support of decayed musicians, he bequeathed to his relations in Germany. He had also lived to acquire a

* *Faulkner's Journal*, April 21st to 24th, 1759; from a London paper.

† *Gentleman's Magazine*, April, 1759.

name, to which the lapse of years has only added increase of glory.

It would be difficult to estimate too highly the benefit which the immortal labours of Handel have conferred on mankind. Had he written nothing but Italian operas, his name would be known at the present day, only by the readers of musical history ; or, at most, by the occasional performance of some beautiful air of his at modern concerts. His secular compositions to English words have ensured him a more permanent place in the admiration of posterity. His *Alexander's Feast*, and *L' Allegro ed Il Penseroso*, afford to us the same delight as to our forefathers ; and modern audiences, even if he had written nothing more, would acknowledge him as one of the greatest geniuses that ever existed. Had he risen no higher than these, his glory would be shared by the other great masters of musical art, who, like him, have in their degree, fulfilled the mission of the musician, by producing works which awaken ideas of the beautiful in the mind. But Handel proved himself equal to the illustration of subjects greater than these. The variety of his powers was astonishing. His genius was equal to the expression of "the awfully vast or the elegantly little."* Whether his theme be the dance of "happy nymphs and happy swains," or the "warbling choir" of forest songsters, or "laughter holding both his sides ;" whether the triumph of "the conquering hero," or "the many rending the skies with loud applause," or the poet listening to the evening song of the "sweet bird, most musical, most melancholy ;"—his music is always exquisitely expressive of,

* Johnson, *Rasselas*.

and equal to his theme. But in his sacred works, his themes are greater than these; they are the loftiest that the heart or mind of man can conceive: and he gives the due expression of them, with the same truth and felicity as he had expressed the poetry of humbler themes. In the highest walks of sacred music, he is, alone, a Colossus without an equal. It was by touching the chords of the beautiful and the sublime in connexion with the most stupendous themes of the Bible: by enforcing the words of inspiration with all the enchanting eloquence of music: and by inseparably associating truths of vital and eternal interest, but too often "despised and rejected," with strains of a matchless and gigantic sublimity, calculated to awaken in the mind the very sentiments appropriate to these truths, that Handel has most eminently manifested his powers, and has bequeathed a rich legacy of moral good to his fellow-creatures.

The musical sentiment is a fact or law, almost universal, of human nature. It is wonderful and mysterious, when we reflect on it, that certain vibrations of the common air we breathe, should have the power to excite in us such pleasurable sensations; to move us to tears, and to create in our minds ideas of exquisite loveliness or grandeur. But it is not more wonderful and mysterious than any other fact arising from the boundless variety of relations existing between our fearfully and wonderfully constructed nature, and the natures of things external to us. Being a part of our nature, it is our duty, no less than our privilege, to accept it, and to obey it. The intellectual, no less than the moral faculties of man, were given him by his Creator, not *in vain*, but that they may be used, and

directed to their several ends. Whatever place in the scale of human pursuits, the student of the world or of human nature may assign to the fine arts, it should never be forgotten, that they have their basis in certain integral parts of human nature. The fine arts need only the same apology as all other great and good pursuits of man, namely, that the impulse to them, and the faculties by which they are contemplated and executed, are parts of that nature which God made in his own image. God, the infinitely wise artificer, produces not only the useful, but also the sublime and the beautiful. The cultivation in our minds of ideas and principles of beauty, order, harmony, grandeur, perfection, is part of that process of education in this probationary state, by which we are made "partakers of the divine nature,"* and fitted for a future and more perfect state of being than this.

It is no objection to this view of human duty, that the nature of man is fallen and corrupt, and that his first business, to which all others must for the present be subordinate, is, to be healed of his moral disorder, and pardoned for his guilt. Such, indeed, should be the primary object of every man; and the only way to accomplish it is, the simple reception of the Gospel. But the Gospel never was intended to supersede human nature, but to purify it, and restore it to its original excellence. It leaves those who have received it, subjects of the intellectual laws of human nature, and of their own individual natures. It does more. By relieving those who have accepted it from a weight of moral disease, by setting them free from the dominion

* 2 Peter i. 4.

of the law of sin and death,* it restores their nature to harmony with itself, to that submission to the laws originally impressed on it, by which only, the great ends of our being can be attained. It enables us to use all our faculties, according to the will of him who gave them; according to the law of righteousness;† the perfect law of liberty.‡

Among the faculties wherewith man is so gloriously endowed, the power of appreciating *beauty* is one which marks his likeness to his divine Creator, and which it is his duty to cultivate equally with all other powers of his intellect. It is cultivated, partly by observation of the works of God in nature; and, also, by the study of human productions of fine art. Works of fine art call forth, or *educate* certain innate sentiments of the human mind, which would otherwise have lain dormant, unawakened, undeveloped; or have manifested their existence, in minds of a peculiar structure, only in vague and painful longings.

The formation in the mind of ideas of the beautiful, as distinct from the merely (so-called) useful, has a part in all great and liberal systems of education. How much are we indebted for such results to the preservation of the master-pieces of Grecian and Roman literature! What a powerful and extensive influence have the forms of Grecian architecture exercised in the formation of the principle of *elegance* in the human mind!

For the production of works of fine art, it is, that some men are especially endowed with the artistic nature; that inventive or creative power, which out of materials of the external world, is able to compose or

* Rom. viii. 2.

† Rom. ix. 31.

‡ James i. 25.

combine works calculated to call forth ideas of sublimity or beauty in the minds of others. This is the mission—the stewardship of the artist.

As a means of cultivating the innate sense of the beautiful, music is one of the most efficient of the fine arts.

It seems strange that sacred music should ever have been denounced by serious Christians, as a thing at variance with true religion. Both the New and the Old Testaments abound with passages, not only approving, but enjoining it. It were singular if it were otherwise. One of the great characteristics of the Bible is the perfect and divine knowledge of human nature, which it exhibits. Its precepts, directed mainly to the recovery and restoration of the moral nature of man, do no where slight or supersede any of his faculties. Christianity is distinguished from all other systems of religion, by this, among other essential qualities, that it is our *reasonable service*. We are commanded to love God not only with all our heart, but also with *all the soul* and with *all the mind*. The entire nature of man is required to be devoted in *actions* to the Author and Governor of the universe.

The exercise of that instinct which impels a man in a state of joy or mirth to sing, is not forbidden in Scripture. What the Scripture does, is to direct his thoughts to the Author of all true joy and happiness. “Is any merry? let him sing psalms.”* “Teach and admonish one another in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord.”†

David poured forth his inmost feelings in poetry and

* James v. 13.

† Ephesians v. 19; Colossians iii. 16.

music; even in the deepest dejection, he found in the union of these divine arts, a faithful expositor of his sorrows. All musical instruments known to him, the lute, the trumpet, the harp, the shawm, the tabret, the cymbals, were summoned by him to join with "everything that hath breath"* in expressing the sentiments of human hearts, in the praises of God.

The great masters of musical art, by giving musical expression to sacred subjects, have only conformed to the laws of nature and the precepts of Scripture. Scripture, equally with nature, recognises music as an interpreter and expression of some of our deepest feelings. The perusal of a fine passage of poetry awakens certain sentiments in the mind. There is a music capable of expressing those sentiments, and blending with them as they arise. The words of that volume, whose voice is more than human, are capable of awakening the loftiest sentiments of our nature. It is no small good to have these words associated with music of extraordinary beauty and sublimity, peculiarly expressive of these very sentiments.

* Psalm cl.

THE END.

ERRATA.

Page 38, line 5, *instead of* "the Lord Lieutenant and Lords Justices," *read* "the Lord
Lieutenant or the Lords Justices."
Page 103, line 9, *instead of* "Briareus," *read* "Briareus."
Page 128, line 6, *after* "he is," *delete* comma.



